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ABSTRACT

A series of weekly seminars were conducted in which 15 elementary and secondary teachers were encouraged and helped to investigate, in some depth, topics related to their current practice. The project was designed to help teachers develop and carry out research investigations in their own classroom. Another project objective was to get the findings published. The rationale was that there should be more efforts to develop and disseminate educational theory from successful pratice. Within this forum, the teachers were encouraged to identify and initiate research into classroom problems and practices that should be investigated. Included in this report are: (1) notes and tapes of the seminar sessions; (2) excerpts from journals kept by the participants; (3) selected responses by staff members to the journal entries; (4) periodic interviews; (5) the director's agenda notes and personal notes on the projects; (6) participant's reports; (7) consultants' reports of observations and interviews done at the request of participants; and (8) staff meeting notes. It is concluded that the project was an effective professional development activity and that the structure of the seminars enabled the group to start building on each other's knowledge. It is questioned, however, whether a contribution was made to systematizing and developing a cumulative body of practitioners' knowledge which requires publication in order to be widely accessible to teachers not in the group. Recommendations are given for changes that would make it more likely that teachers would write reports of their investigations and get them published. (JD)

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TEACHER-INITIATED RESEARCH: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TEACHERS AND A METHOD FOR DESIGNING RESEARCH BASED ON PRACTICE

FINAL REPORT
GRANT NO. NIE-G-80-0162
PROJECT NO. 0-0219

August 28, 1981

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We appreciate the assistance of Adeline Naiman, managing director of TERC, in carrying out this project.

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THE EVOLUTION, THE IDEA AND THE PROJECT

C

INTRODUCTION

The Teacher-initiated Research Project was based in large part on the experiences of the Director, Claryce Evans. Through her prior experiences as a staff developer for federally funded school improvement projects and later, as a graduate student, Evans had been led to question the typical role of researchers and evaluators in school improvement efforts and began to discern a need for a form of research more closely related to practice--one which acknowledged more clearly the central role of practitioners in education. Sponsored by the Technical Education Research Centers (TERC), Evans submitted a proposal to the National Institute of Education and was awarded federal funding with which to implement her idea. TERC is a publicly supported nonprofit corporation carrying out educational research, development, and dissemination since 1965 in several centers across the United States. The project was housed in TERC's headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The project was designed to help teachers develop and carry out investigations in their own classrooms. Evans and the project staff believe that there should be more efforts to develop educational theory from successful practice as well as efforts to convince practitioners to apply theory and research findings. Educational theory may be conceived from a practical framework; it was the goal of the project to provide teachers an opportunity to work on that task.

Since most of the teachers who participated had not done research--thought of it as remote from their day-to-day experiences, and had not thought of themselves as capable of carrying it out--the staff found the greatest challenge and satisfaction was to develop a set of experiences through which teachers could recognize that their work was, indeed, worthy of documentation; that documenting it was a worthy task; that they could help each other learn to do it; that their results could be interesting and useful to other teachers in the group--and by extension teachers at large--even though not final or complete; and that they could write those results for a wider audience if they chose to do so.

Evans' experience in school improvement efforts also led her to believe that improvements in education can come about through attention to, and development of, small accidental successful ideas. In the following statement, she gives an idea of how her personal experiences shaped her present thinking about the role of research and theory in informing practice and how she came to design the Teacher-initiated Research Project.

As a staff developer for an external school improvement project in poor, Black, urban schools which were staffed almost exclusively by Whites, I found myself frustrated by a number of problems: problems in the schools, counterproductive project evaluations, and my own inability to conceive alternative plans for evaluation which were acceptable to, or even deemed worthy of consideration by, people on the project staff who were trained in research and evaluation.

There were a few, experienced, competent teachers in the schools in which we worked who had learned how to do a good job in a difficult setting. They were on good terms with building administrators because they maintained discipline in their classrooms and in the corridors; they were accepted by other tenured teachers in the buildings; they provided students with challenging learning environments; and, to the amazement of the project staff, they still had energy to think of ways to help less successful, struggling colleagues. Other teachers in these schools appeared to have learned to survive with little emotional strain by relying on teaching routines and blaming the lack of results on the students; or, more often, the families of the students. Still others experienced anguish, were isolated by their colleagues, were sometimes denied teaching supplies until they had "proven" themselves, tried innovations which they were sometimes not able to manage effectively, and, for the most part, blamed the racism of their fellow teachers for the schools' failures. My colleagues and I came to see that the schools failed to provide an environment which was professional and supportive for teachers as much as they failed to teach students. Though it was clear that improving the environment for teachers was a prerequisite for improving the environment for students, that was not easy to do. We wanted to better understand the actions of teachers and the shifts in behavior which were taking place. This agenda, however, did not suit the tidy model of the project evaluators--training teachers in new techniques and measuring student performance on standardized achievement tests.

Later as a graduate student, having read Unobtrusive Measures[1] *and The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*[2] *but still basically a practitioner with little formal training in research methodology, I experienced frustration in trying to fit my goals into a theoretical framework*

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[1] Eugene J. Webb, et al., Unobtrusive Measures, (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1966).

[2] Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962).

with a defensible research design. I began planning my dissertation with the desire to document and report, for other practitioners, the practices of successful principals and their explanations of their actions. When I began this work I had had extensive experiences in schools and school improvement efforts, but had not been a school principal and had not worked closely with any I viewed as particularly effective. I viewed myself as a learner and recorder rather than as an evaluator. I did not assume that I had a better understanding of the role of the principal in implementing school change than the principals I studied.

That was and still is an odd role for a researcher. Almost without exception, researchers assume that their view is more worthy of professional consideration than those of the people being studied, even when they study practices which they have identified as successful. They seem to take this position because they have a more explicit theory and because they attempt to account for the practitioners' explanations of their actions as well as the actions themselves. They thereby put themselves in the position of explaining the practitioners to other researchers rather than to other practitioners. Though not yet able to state my position in a way which could be understood by educational researchers, I assumed that one appropriate role for a researcher was to identify successful practitioners and document their practice, in their own terms, for other practitioners to read about, understand, and judge. Readers of my study, however, asked, "What is your theoretical framework for evaluating these principals?" or "It's interesting to read what these principals report about their actions, why they took them, and what they think about them, but what is <u>your</u> conclusion?" I did not assume that I need have the final word--I would leave that for the individual reader.

It was, however, ultimately my positive experiences as a consultant to a number of Follow Through Projects which led me to my present interest in the role of practitioners in educational research. During this time, a colleague and I developed a system of interviewing teachers and observing in classrooms to aid in planning staff development activities. We found, over time, that the interviews and observations had an unplanned outcome--they were viewed as valuable by the teachers as well as being useful to us in our planning. Later, working as a consultant to a summer program which combined a school for young children with a concentrated staff development program, I decided to use that unplanned outcome and offer to observe teachers' classrooms as one of the available staff development activities. It turned out that less of my time was available for the program than

originally planned and, at the same time, more teachers chose classroom observations than I had anticipated. I decided to solve this time problem by asking teachers to choose partners and observe for each other. I offered to conduct a seminar in which they could plan for the observations and report on them.

The observations and discussions of the teachers themselves were, it seemed to me, more successful than my original plan, of observing them myself and having individual conferences with them, would have been. It was here I noticed for the first time the enormous power of a group of peers attending to issues of immediate concern to individual teachers. I also noticed that the group kept a clear focus of discussion with no intervention on my part. Issues were defined in advance by each of the teachers and later reported on by the observers. As often happens when classroom situations are described, others in the group responded by recalling incidents from their own experience. The discussion differed sharply from the usual pattern, however, in that the responding teachers selected incidents to discuss which were directly related to the initial presentation and then made those relationships clear. At the end of the summer program one of the teachers suggested, and the others unanimously agreed, that they should try to persuade administrators in their system to continue the activity in the fall.

Shortly thereafter I resigned as a consultant to take a job as a public school teacher. I soon began to notice that though there were many excellent staff development activities available to me in the system in which I worked, there were none which related directly to my personal agenda for improving my teaching and few which lasted more than a semester. I began to try to find funding to support a staff development program for myself and other teachers which would be based on classroom observations. Several teachers in my school had attended Children's Thinking seminars with Bill Hull and, with the encouragement of the principal, they and I began a seminar in which we discussed our classrooms.[3] *Since I had not secured funding, we had no budget and no leader, no paid observers and no detailed minutes. Yet the meetings were more useful to me than any others I attended as a teacher.*

During this time, I also served on a committee which reviewed all requests for testing, research, and evaluation within the system. The primary purpose of the committee

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[3] Bill Hull, Teachers Seminars on Children's Thinking, A Progress Report, (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Press, 1978).

was to protect students, teachers, and the educational program from too frequent, poorly timed, or overly intrusive data collection procedures. Those of us on the committee were confident of our ability to fulfill this purpose and to help researchers avoid data collection procedures and schedules which would alienate students, teachers, or parents. We were not initially as confident of our ability to judge whether data collection procedures proposed in the requests we read were likely to produce reasonable answers to the questions posed. Over time, however, we became more confident; we more frequently evaluated the designs as well as the schedules and suggested modifications to improve the quality of the research.

We were yet more hesitant to analyze carefully the value of the researchers' questions, though many of them seemed unrelated to any of our concerns about teaching. Our reactions to them varied greatly. In some cases we allowed the fact that the question had been proposed by a member of a respected research institution to interfere with our own understanding of the question's worth. In other cases we thought, "This doesn't have anything to do with schools or students' learning, let them find kids somewhere else." I came to hope that in time, the committee would take a more active role in defining questions to be addressed by issuing 'requests for research' rather than just responding to proposals from others.

Later as a principal, I attended a Summer Institute at the Prospect Center for Education and Research where I became familiar with the work of Pat Carini and the Philadelphia Teachers' Learning Cooperative--an outgrowth of Carini's work.[4] That experience and my knowledge of Hull's work, confirmed my view that long-term seminars, centered on classrooms, although rarely available in staff development programs, can be extremely beneficial to teachers.

I saw that Carini, like Hull, was encouraging thoughtful teachers to write about their classroom practice. I also knew that Chittenden, Bussis, and Amarel of ETS were collaborating with teachers in their research of children's entry into reading.[5] In all of these enterprises, teachers were acknowledged and respected as sources of knowledge--a very different attitude from the

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[4] Patricia F. Carini, Observation and Description: An Alternative Methodology for the Investigation of Human Phenomena, (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Press, 1975).

[5] Personal Communication, Ted Chittenden, February 1980.

one I had most often experienced. I concluded that teachers might not only identify areas to be investigated by others, but might also initiate research into questions of interest to them.

RATIONALE

The knowledge that teachers have about educational practice, and the enormous potential power of that knowledge to inform practice, is undervalued both by themselves and by the rest of the educational profession. As a result there are two few occasions for teachers to share with each other and make public their deeper understandings of their work. Teachers rarely make these occasions for themselves because they do not consider that what they know has value in this way. Nor does the rest of the educational community encourage them to do so.

The lack of a forum in which teachers carry on in-depth professional conversations over a long period of time perpetuates, in turn, the view that teachers' knowledge has little to contribute to further understanding in the field. That is, because teachers most frequently experience their peers either in informal settings or in staff development programs in which their usual role is audience, they have few opportunities to see the more reflective, knowledgeable side of their colleagues. They conclude, reasonably but erroneously, that teachers as a group are not very impressive. They don't talk seriously to each other and so they don't take themselves seriously as a group. They don't talk seriously to each other because they don't take themselves seriously as a group.

The result is that the profession has not yet acquired a collective body of knowledge based on teachers' individual contributions.

The other side of devaluing what teachers know is the failure to take seriously what teachers need to know, would like to know, are concerned about, have as questions. Yet these questions are significant in that they grow out of this body of practical knowledge. Again, without a forum in which these questions can be clarified and their importance weighed, the questions remain unevaluated and unaddressed. The result is that the profession does not work on the most significant issues--those most likely to have positive results for schools.

In brief, nowhere is effort put into systematizing teachers' professional knowledge or contributing to its evolution. Teachers do not take their professional knowledge seriously enough to do it themselves and researchers do not take teachers' professional knowledge seriously enough to devote their resources to doing so.

Not only is teachers' cumulative knowledge undervalued, their central role in the profession is also unacknowledged. Educational practice is what teachers do: students' educational experience is most directly the experience they have with teachers. If research is to affect practice,

it must be through what teachers do, how they do it, and what it means to them. It must address their central concerns and must be accessible to them. Yet by and large the research field proceeds as if their findings can bypass the thoughtful consideration of teachers. Even those researchers whose main interest is the improvement of practice do not consider teachers the primary audience for their work. It is as if some intermediary can judge their findings and make decisions of which teachers can then be apprised. The assumption is that teachers can act on the basis of information schematically conveyed to them, without making it a part of their personal knowledge and relating it to that central set of concerns.

Teachers for their part are too willing to let this happen. They are too often willing to follow an intermediary's judgment rather than take the responsibility to make their own informed judgments. Many teachers pay no attention to research even in those areas in which that attention would be rewarded. This is largely in response to the fact that research is not written for their consideration. Researchers ignore teachers; teachers ignore researchers right back.

As a result, educational research currently contributes little to improving teachers' practice.

This separation of those who practice from those who study practice could be diminished from either end. Researchers could take teachers' knowledge seriously, start to help them sort out questions, and then try to answer those questions. Or, teachers could take their knowledge seriously, try to articulate what they know and find ways to answer what they do not know, and make known to the research community unanswered, well-defined questions which they view as important. This project addressed itself to the second of these two possibilities.

We took as a base for sustained professional dialogue the teachers' own knowledge of their educational practice. We set as a research agenda the teachers' own concerns.

THE PROJECT IN BRIEF

The project was a series of weekly seminars in which teachers were each encouraged and helped to investigate, in some depth, a topic related to their practice. They were assisted by discussion in a group of peers, secretarial assistance, access to a photocopying machine, observation and substitute time, consultant time, audio and video tapes, books and articles, and photocopying.

We documented the seminar, the teachers' investigations, and the outcomes, through notes and tapes of the seminar sessions, journals kept by the participants, staff response to the journal entries, periodic interviews, the director's agenda notes and personal notes on the project, participants' reports, consultants' reports of observations and interviews done at the request of participants, and staff meeting notes.

STAFF

People were needed to fill the roles of director, documentor, interviewer, and secretary. Evans, as the principal investigator, served as the director of the project; Margaret (Peggy) Stubbs was the documentor; Eleanor Duckworth was the interviewer; and Abbye Cohen was the secretary. All four members of the staff worked part-time.

THE DIRECTOR

As has been detailed on pp. 3-7, Evans is an experienced practitioner with a long-term interest in the relation of educational research and theory to practice. She has had research experience as a doctoral student and as a staff member of several federally funded projects. She is a former classroom teacher and consultant and, during the project, was the principal of a public elementary school.

Her tasks included:

- oversee project activities, reports and budgets,
- hire staff,
- identify and communicate with consultants,
- recruit participants,
- solicit and maintain the cooperation of the participants' school systems,
- hire graduate students for data collection,
- consult with individual teachers as required,
- respond to participants' journal entries,
- conduct seminars,
- conduct staff meetings,
- suggest articles for teachers,
- help write quarterly and final reports on the project for NIE.

THE DOCUMENTOR

Stubbs is a doctoral candidate in Social and Developmental Psychology at Brandeis University. Her research interests include motivation, creativity, fantasy play, female development, and the application of psychological theory in real-world settings. Prior to beginning her degree work, she had extensive experience as a teacher at a wide range of grade levels, in public and private schools. She has carried out her own classroom investigations, has been a recorder and newsletter editor for the Children's Thinking Seminars[6] , and is currently coediting a book on educational research and practice.

Her role was to:

- keep written notes on seminar meetings,
- tape record each seminar session,
- respond to participants' journal entries,
- consult with individual teachers as required,
- help participants write papers if they chose to to try to publish,
- conduct seminars in the director's absence,
- suggest articles for teachers,
- keep minutes of staff meetings,
- consult with individual teachers as required,
- help in the preparation of the quarterly and final reports.

THE INTERVIEWER

Eleanor Duckworth, a recognized authority on the relation of Piagetian research to classroom practice, was the project interviewer. Her career has taken her to France, Switzerland, and Africa as well as her native Canada. Fluent in French and English, she has translated significant texts into English. She has conducted a number of project evaluations and has engaged in a number of teacher development projects. During the project she was a Research Associate at MIT.

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[6]Margaret Stubbs, et. al., eds., Children's Thinking Newsletter, (Concord, Mass.: 1981).

Her duties included:

- interview each participant three times during the year,
- document seminars when needed,
- keep minutes of staff meetings,
- help in the preparation of the quarterly and final reports.

THE SECRETARY

We were fortunate to have the services of Abbye Cohen as our secretary. She has had extensive secretarial experience and supported our efforts consistently.

Her duties included:

- handle all correspondence and supply orders,
- type the final copy of the notes for each seminar session, staff meeting, and interview,
- photocopy entries from participants' journals and staff responses,
- transcribe tape recordings when necessary,
- prepare the meeting room and refreshments,
- distribute notes to seminar participants at the beginning of meetings,
- type and/or photocopy participants' reports or samples of students' work for presentation at seminar sessions.

ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPANTS

In addition to the regular staff, the project developed a pool of former teachers and graduate students who were available to participating teachers to assist them with their investigations.

The project made available consultants to:

- observe in classrooms,
- interview teachers or students,
- videotape in classrooms,

- review and analyze videotapes,
- substitute in the classroom to free the teacher to collect data,
- conduct library searches.

THE SEMINARS

PRIOR TO THE SESSIONS

RECRUITING THE PARTICIPANTS

Our commitment was to recruit twelve to fifteen teachers from elementary urban and suburban school systems representing a racial and gender mix. We decided neither to require attendance by two or more teachers from one school as recommended by those advocating school-based staff development, nor to discourage it. Rather we decided to see what happened in either case, as part of our documentation for the benefit of future implementation.

The process of getting the project known to a large number of potential participants and of communicating enough of it to develop in them realistic expectations, was not easy. We wrote a one-page announcement describing our project, to be distributed widely in the area (see Appendix A). We found that mailing this announcement to administrators, asking that it be posted on school bulletin boards, was not effective. Even in two districts where members of the central administration gave strong support to the project and asked all elementary school principals to bring the seminar to the attention of teachers, recruitment of teachers occurred only through personal contacts with project members or our colleagues.

In another system we found individual letters to teachers who had received mini-grants produced more responses than any other recruitment effort. This system had had, for several years, a mini-grant program in support of desegregation. Teachers were eligible to apply for small grants to support integration in their classrooms or schools. Since the program was federally funded, the list of recipients is public information and was made available to us.

In general, recruitment of teachers took more time and effort on our part than we anticipated. Initially, when fewer people joined the seminar than we anticipated, we were advised by colleagues that we would need to offer stipends and credits to attract teachers to the seminar. We therefore put aside part of the money budgeted for consultants to pay each participant a stipend of $150. We also made arrangements with a nearby college so participants could obtain graduate credits for attending the seminars.

All participants accepted the stipend but we have no evidence that it had any impact on their interest in the project. Participants were also informed that money had been budgeted to cover the costs of child care during seminar sessions and for transportation or parking. Very few

participants asked to be reimbursed for parking costs. When participants were informed of the possibility of obtaining credit some people were initially interested but put off by the prospect of paying $150-450 for credit when none of the work was done by the college. One participant called it "outrageous." It did not seem that there was very much concern about credit. Most people were there to learn rather than to accrue credit. As one participant pointed cut, the teachers could include attendance at the seminar in their resumes, and that was enough. Only one participant planned to obtain graduate credit, having been referred to the project by her advisor.

We later came to think that the slow response was due to the timing of our recruitment efforts. Early September was not the optimal time for recruiting: teachers were unresponsive to written notices because they were appropriately concerned with the start of school. We now believe that recruitment should have taken place in the spring of the previous year, with final arrangements made in late September after teachers had started the new year of teaching.

Nevertheless, we attracted fifteen teachers, with some diversity, and by mid-October had as many more on our waiting list. The group consisted of eight Boston Public School teachers, three teachers from the Newton Public Schools, one each from Arlington, Brookline, and Watertown Public Schools, and one from the Advent School, an alternative, private urban school whose population mirrors the racial and economic diversity of Boston. Two of the participants taught in the same school and were interested in doing a joint project. All of the others worked in different schools.

The backgrounds and teaching assignments of the participants varied, as did their ages and years of experience. Some of the teachers were liberal arts graduates who chose or happened upon teaching after college, others had trained to be teachers as undergraduates. The age range was late twenties to mid-fifties and they ranged from two years of experience to twenty-five.

The group included eight classroom teachers, three art specialists, two bilingual teachers, one home economics teacher for middle grades, and one special needs teacher. The students they taught ranged in age from kindergarten through ninth grade. They taught from five (in the case of the special needs teacher) to 300 students per week.

WHO CAME AND WHY

The teachers who joined the project were:

- P.C., an art specialist, in a suburban elementary school,
- M.E., an art appreciation teacher in an urban middle school,
- N.Go., a fourth grade teacher in a suburban school,
- N.Gu., a home economics teacher in an urban elementary school,

- R.J., a special education teacher in an urban school,
- C.K., a second grade teacher in a private, alternative elementary school,
- R.M., a part-time kindergarten teacher in a suburban elementary school,
- N.R., a reading and language arts teacher in an urban middle school,
- M.R., a second grade teacher in an urban elementary school,
- F.R., a bilingual teacher in an urban middle school,
- R.S., a bilingual teacher in an urban middle school,
- P.S., a kindergarten teacher in an urban elementary school,
- D.T., an art specialist in a suburban elementary school,
- W.T., a first grade teacher in a suburban elementary school, and
- J.W., a third grade teacher in a suburban elementary school.

Though it was hard to produce a flyer which adequately described the project in advance, for purposes of recruitment and initiating people into the process, it was clear from the teachers' comments in their interviews that the flyer had communicated some aspects of the process to each individual. Each person had been attracted by a part of what was available even though no one indicated a sense of the whole.

In discussing with the project interviewer why they were interested in joining the seminar, most participants cited the need for stimulation from other interested adults that would keep their teaching alive. In the first interviews seminar members put it this way:

> *I don't have enough time with grownups doing the same thing that I'm doing. It's a way of getting ideas. You have to talk to people about what you do, how you do it, why you do it, whether it works. I would like to know why things work. I know <u>when</u> they do, but I'm going on instinct. I need theoretical underpinnings of what I do--though I have an unconscious selection process.* (Interview)

> *The idea of getting together with other teachers, talking about classrooms appeals to me. In my last school I felt isolated. At another school where I taught, I knew about seminars that staff members went to, and they seemed good for the people involved.* (Interview)

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[7] Throughout this report, we have cited the source and double spaced between quotations from two people or two sources. A new paragraph in a continuing quotation is indicated visually by smaller spacing, as well as the absence of a citation.

Many of the participants mentioned that staff meetings in their own schools failed to provide the kind of setting in which they could pursue professional concerns.

> *Staff meetings are bitch sessions. At the end of the meeting there's supposed to be time to talk about problems, but nobody is interested.* (Interview)

> *With colleagues, it fizzles out; you can talk about curriculum, but not about what's important to me.* (Interview)

Some teachers mentioned that they were specifically attracted to the seminars because of the help with writing and publishing that the project offered.

Several of the seminar members were interested in the project because of its emphasis on research. Some had a general interest in research.

> *The idea of research also appealed to me. What we teach is so different from what the children are interested in--the curriculum versus the child, that's what I'm interested in--the textbooks, the way of being in school, the classroom experience--that all either goes against or with children's nature. I want to find out what research addresses that issue.*

> *I haven't read a great deal from educational literature--I read more psychology. I took education courses during my psychology degree, and I have since then also, but the emphasis was more technical--that is, they were about how to manipulate the classroom environment; that doesn't meet my needs.* (Interview)

> *I know what I know, but I can't prove it. If you don't have statistics, nobody takes your word for it.* (Interview)

Some had topics which they were interested in investigating, but which they felt on their own they would probably not pursue in any depth.

> *We wanted to try the Cloze procedure as a teaching procedure. We had both heard about this. We could probably have done that without the seminar, but we probably wouldn't have gotten started.* (Interview)

Others were less specific about what they intended to investigate but believed that, given the structure of the seminar, they would probably come up with something interesting to explore, of potential use to others.

> *Partly, I was interested to have the resources to pursue something. I don't know what I want to pursue, but I want to think about it. I could do it on my own, but I wouldn't get to do it.* (Interview)

> *So, I thought I might be able to research something of value to others.* (Interview)

For one seminar member, revitalizing his professional life was a way of making his personal life more meaningful. He reported that he had heard about the seminar after seeing Arthur Miller interviewed on television:

> *Miller was talking about Death of a Salesman. The salesman's trying to find a meaning in his life--"I just paid the last mortgage payment today." I decided to try to put meaning in everything I did.* (Interview)

GRADUATE PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

Before the seminar sessions began, Christine Davis joined the project unexpectedly. Her background included six years of experience organizing, running, and writing about similar teacher development programs in Australia. As part of a course in ethnomethodology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, she was looking for a long-term teacher development program in which she could be a participant observer. In exchange for being able to observe the seminar, she agreed to attend seminars and staff meetings for the full duration of the project, to help with observations in participants' classrooms when necessary, and to make her report on the project available to the staff to be used as they thought best.

As it turned out, in the second semester she assumed some staff responsibilities:

- suggest articles for teachers,
- consult with individual teachers as required,
- provide feedback for participants who choose to write reports,
- keep minutes of staff meetings,
- help write quarterly and final reports.

BEGINNING

SETTING AND ROUTINES

Seminars were held weekly on Thursday afternoons from 4:00 until 6:00. The 6:00 finishing time was adhered to rigorously by the seminar leader and initially most people tended to leave at once. Increasingly throughout the year, participants lingered for brief conversations with each other or staff members. Though there were no coffee breaks during the sessions, the project provided coffee and cheese and crackers which people were free to get at any time. Some people preferred to have wine and took turns bringing it each week. Smoking was banned at the suggestion of the seminar leader and with the agreement of the group.

The seminars were held in the basement of the TERC building in a room which was in the process of being refurbished when the project began. It had been two offices until a short time before and presented a fairly unpleasant atmosphere. Pipes and wiring were exposed; there was the beginning of a wooden structure in one corner; and the walls were not painted. The floor was cold and uncarpeted and the legs of the chairs made an unpleasant loud noise as people moved them in or out. The room improved as the year progressed as exposed wires and pipes were encased, construction completed, and the room painted.

Since some of the teachers worked in depressing urban schools they were not too critical of the conditions of the seminar. However, it did present a problem in that the room was barely large enough to accommodate the whole group and provided no flexibility for planning comfortable small group sessions.

The access, one flight up, to a copying machine and the services of the secretary from 4:00 to 5:00 were invaluable.

Priority was given in the first few sessions to explaining the idea of the project, resources available to participants, and expectations for participation, to people introducing themselves to the group in their own terms, and to establishing procedures. Since several people did not join the group until the second or third session, introductions were part of the agenda for several sessions.

After the introductory sessions, most followed a predictable pattern: announcement of the agenda, other announcements and an opportunity for participants to schedule time for discussion of their investigation at future seminars, and presentation of a topic or question by a participant followed by discussion by the group.

GETTING STARTED

In introducing the teachers to the ideas behind the project, the director outlined its evolution. She expressed the hope that the seminar, by providing a way for teachers to conduct their own research, would prove to be one effective way for teachers to increase and share their knowledge.

Just as the flyer could not communicate the subtlety and complexity of the process, the introductory remarks were not enough to dispell confusion. In addition, as the year progessed, the director and other staff members continued to find themselves facing dilemmas, confusions and questions. The early questions, both for the participants and the director, usually concerned the limits of the project and the guidelines for discussions. We now think some of the initial confusion and redefinition was inevitable and that some of it could be lessened if the project were repeated.

Group Discussions

During the first session, when two participants entered into a lengthy discussion about the busing policies of the Boston Public Schools--one maintaining that they had detrimental effects on the composition of her classroom, the other that busing was a just attempt to provide quality education for all students--the director indicated that the seminars were to be task oriented: that complaints or discussions about administrators' actions or policies over which no one in the room had any control were out of bounds.

She established further guidelines for group discussion in the second session and presented her reasons for doing so. She explained:

> *In my view teaching is a very personal task. To discuss it in any depth means to discuss one's own values and expectations for oneself, probably to discuss one's evaluation of one's performance. To take that risk, one needs a safe environment. The group needs to accept and respect the person in order to provide for that.*
>
> *At the same time, in the recruiting, we deliberately sought diversity. The diversity in positions, types of schools, and age of students has already been established. We expect we will find there is also diversity in points of view toward education: What is the task? What are the goals? I am convinced, however, that people can be of great help to each other even when they have quite different views on some issues.*
>
> *Given that diversity, what can we do to establish a very safe environment for the group?*
>
> *--Remind ourselves that there are lots of different ways to be a good teacher.*

--I have seen in working with Pat Carini and Bill Hull that they convey the tone for their groups through their own standards and hope that we, as a staff, will do that too.

--We also need some guidelines for responding to presentations:
1) accept the other person's descriptions of the reality even if you don't agree with the interpretation;
2) the task is to help other people to clarify their own ideas, not convert them to yours;
3) ask questions which are questions, not questions which are suggestions in disguise. "Have you tried -- ?" in contrast with "What have you tried?";
4) separate your suggestions from your questions. (Agenda Notes)

The guidelines ensured that the atmosphere was supportive. All of the participants commented upon the warmth of the group. There was a measure of safety, and there were few attempts to persuade others to change their teaching practices.

The general quality and style of the interaction between the participants and participants and staff has been very good. There has been an ease and comfort from the very beginning. Although there were the different styles of interaction--from quiet to jolly to reflective to outgoing--there is a general feeling of goodwill within the group.

As people talk with each other, they use devices which show some experience of groups and the techniques advocated by many group theorists (they listen well, they paraphrase, they make "I" statements, they don't "tell you"--they "share with you"). Some are particularly adept at responding well to any opening or issue that a person raises although all are very likely to fill that role. There seems to be a high level of acceptance of the others in the group. (Davis Short Report)

It is not clear, however, that participants differentiated between making attempts to change others' teaching styles and questioning the assumptions behind another's plan for conducting an investigation. As a result, people did not always feel free to ask what they wanted. It is likely, therefore, that some useful forms of discussion were suppressed. In the final session we asked people to respond to this statement:

We have emphasized developing an open/safe environment in which each person is helped to think about his/her question in a way consistent with his/her teaching and point of view. Some people in interviews have said they would have liked more challenge to people's ideas or more opportunity to ask each other "Why do we do what we do?" rather than so much "How?". What do you think? Are there ways we could combine both? (List of questions distributed to participants)

Though most people appreciated the atmosphere of the group, their comments in that session express a range of reactions.

> *People are insecure about "research" and wondered what it was all about, and I wondered if what I was doing was all a waste. Too much challenge would have been crushing.* (Meeting Notes)

> *When I felt judgmental, I became quiet. I felt that's what I should do according to the rules of the game. (Another participant also found herself doing this.) I wouldn't change the rules.* (Meeting Notes)

> *I wish there had been more intellectual questioning. I wanted to have to prove what I was saying and to have other people want me to and to want them to also. I needed this motivation of having to prove if I was right or wrong.* (Meeting Notes)

> *I wanted more challenge too, especially in the beginning. I feel that maybe if I got more challenge, then maybe I'd be less anxious.* (Meeting Notes)

> *In a way I wanted more too but I fell prey to the pressures of time. And then I got defensive and worried.* (Meeting Notes)

> *I felt that being forced not to challenge was a challenge for me. I needed to listen and not be judgmental. I've learned to listen better and concentrated on that rather than on formulating my arguments....It's a very tough situation. You've taught for a number of years, and you've formulated your own opinions about many things--you think you have answers to some things, for yourself at least. Then someone asks a question that you think you've already worked out the answer for. How can you respond without saying "I know the answer." How can you stop yourself from tuning out, that is the other temptation.* (Meeting Notes)

Though we were careful to establish guidelines for participants responding to others' presentations, we did not provide guidelines for the presenter. The need for further thought concerning such guidelines was made clear when the director and one of the project participants conducted an evening seminar on the subject at the invitation of the Education Collaborative of the Greater Boston Area. The evening consisted of opening remarks, a brainstorming session of the teachers in attendance, an abbreviated simulation of the seminar process and a closing summary and response to questions.

In the simulation, N., a teacher of hearing-impaired students in a high school, volunteered to present a question of interest to her. The group of teachers in attendance that evening (as the project participants do each week) asked clarifying questions regarding her situation and purposes and then made suggestions.

As N. responded to some of the final suggestions, it became clear

that she had failed to include in her presentation some information which was essential for understanding the situation or for making sensible suggestions. The information was essential but was also not at all obvious so that no hints of it arose in the period when people asked extensive questions. Having seen an extreme example in that setting, we then recognized the same phenomenon in more subtle forms in the meetings of the project seminar.

We now think explicit guidelines for presenters would have been helpful and that such guidelines should include an explicit statement of the areas in which the presenter desires suggestions as well as a structure for presenting the context in which the teacher works. That idea was reinforced in rereading the interviews and journal entries of two teachers whose classroom procedures were strongly questioned in the group.

The investigation and data collection procedures used by two teachers in the group were closely tied to their teaching techniques: they were using the Cloze procedure as an instructional method and, in their project, as a measure of student progress. Several members of the group were critical of the procedure--some critical of it as a teaching procedure, others as a measurement instrument. The director did not interrupt the discussion, later wondered whether the discussion had been helpful to the presenters, and wrote notes to them in their journals. One of the teachers had mixed reactions to the incident, and later was one of the people who expressed a desire for more challenge in the seminar.

Dear Claryce,

Last week's discussion left me with both positive and negative reactions. Like you, I came away with a feeling that people were trying to change our minds about the use of Cloze as a valid measure of comprehension. Such opinions don't surprise me. The Cloze is such a unique method of looking at reading comprehension that most people, on first exposure, reject its validity. Even I had problems with it when I first learned about it. After three years I've become convinced of the usefulness of the Cloze. Likewise within the reading profession--research on its usage as an instructional and testing tool is increasing. Even Boston has adopted it as a tool for measuring the reading scores of its bilingual students in both L_1 (first language) and L_2 (English). I could go on and on citing examples of WHY the Cloze is valid and what the literature says. I feel that perhaps people in our group reacted on an emotional bias against the format of our procedure--of which they knew very little. Their bias fogged the issue of what N. and I are trying to research.

Even though people were questioning <u>what</u> we were doing and <u>how</u> the Cloze fit into our schema I felt all in all people were respectful. The questions that were raised were interesting. The questions gave me a perspective I don't have about the Cloze since I'm already "sold" on its validity.

What I found really interesting about the discussion was people's suggestions on how the Cloze could be used as an instructional tool. I felt that everyone was open enough and imaginative enough to see alternative uses. The spirit of investigation and questioning was exciting. The ideas that people gave us were good ones. We'll probably incorporate them into our curriculum.

Although people gave some good ideas, about using the Cloze, I don't think they were helpful in our analysis of errors. You and Peggy provided a good part of the impetus in focusing in on our needs.

Could our presentation of the problem have been part of the difficulty?

Was the group so unclear as to what we're doing that they grabbed onto the technique so as to have something to discuss?

Perhaps we were in fact part of the problems. (Journal)

On the one hand, everyone tries to make an effort. On the other hand, sometimes it's taken too lightly. Someone's pursuit is taken too lightly--not often, but sometimes. Another thing is the urban/suburban mix. There are preconceived notions that are hard to break down....Our research is cognitive, the others' research is about behavior or problems that we wouldn't bother dealing with. I have this vision of their kids all at grade level so they're free to deal with these other issues....

The suburban teachers don't have to worry about how the building looks. Ours looks like a war zone, holes in the blackboards, desks falling over. These things make a real difference to students learning. I have not felt [that much of a barrier with my research but N. has.] I was disappointed last week. I know, I understand why we were cut off last week, but it made us feel sort of shitty.[8] (Interview)

The other teacher who was investigating the Cloze procedure also referred to the incident and later expressed her belief that part of the difficulty arose from other people's failure to understand the context in which she worked.

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[8] We have used brackets in the quotes from interviews to indicate that we have added a phrase or word from the interviewer's question in order to make the participant's meaning clear. In those cases where we have deleted a name of a person, school, or project or added an explanatory phrase to any of the original sources, we have used parentheses.

My impression is that the group doesn't think the Cloze procedure is a good project. So to ask them about flaws I'm sure I would hear too many. I'm not ready to change my mind completely. People said, "This isn't right, this isn't good for those students." I'm afraid they'll do that again before listening to our explanation. Some people hinted strongly that we were trying to present no flaws. We didn't mean that. The reaction was a blanket negative thing that made us defensive. We weren't able to get good suggestions. The phrase about people trying to enlighten comes to mind. Even if people were convinced we were totally off the wall, why did they have to convince us within that half hour? They had to thoroughly convince us! If they were right, we would have discovered soon enough!!

We're doing our project because there's a lot of stock put in standardized tests. I want to have a lot of examples: "Here's where we think the dialect is interfering with comprehension," and have them tell us if they think it is or if not what they think is going on. (Interview)

I think there was a kind of culture conflict. Judgments were made (particularly about our project), partly because it was hard to imagine the other person's setting. The differences between the city and the suburbs are significant. Maybe there could have been some way of arranging for people to see where each other worked and with whom. People don't tend to visit urban schools unless there is a problem or as an example of a problem. This would be positive for use as a seminar and for the other school personnel to experience someone from the outside being interested enough to come observe. (Meeting Notes)

I think we have to understand the different schools better. So we understand where we come from. I was shy at first. After a while I began to relax more. But it was sort of a disappointment when I realized they didn't understand where we came from. It's important that we know that. I suggested making school visits. Maybe slides or some way to get a picture in your mind about the school and the kids. I meant more a flavor of the school, where the person is coming from, because to people who've never been in them, urban schools are quite shocking. But that shouldn't be missed, the opportunity to be shocked. (Interview)

In general, people recognized and understood the distinction between making suggestions and asking questions and the importance of asking questions to help others clarify their thoughts. Nearly all of them made mention of it in their journal notes. Though recognizing the distinction, some found that learning the skill was a new challenge.

I don't know if I've learned from (the other participants) but as teachers we're all learning this new way of approaching problems. None of us is ahead of anyone in asking questions so that person can reflect. I learned from this group that this is something we need to do as a profession. (Interview)

Brainstorming

As we anticipated, participants were more inclined to focus on teaching strategies rather than on ways to identify and collect relevant information. In order to differentiate between the two tasks and emphasize that ours was to define an investigation, a brainstorming session was held during the third seminar. The participants were asked to think about two different issues. In each case they were asked to generate, without discussion, a list which the director wrote on newsprint around the room. The first list was generated in response to:

-- *ways to make information available to yourself,*
-- *ways to collect information,*
-- *ways to become more aware of what you know,*
-- *ways to better understand something that is happening.* (Agenda Notes)

The second in response to:

-- *questions you might ask about something you are currently doing,*
-- *questions you asked yourself last year for which you would have liked to have had better answers,*
-- *a hunch you have about something in your room about which you'd like more information,*
-- *a phrase which represents something which puzzles you,*
-- *a phrase which represents a problem which information might help you resolve,*
-- *something about which you are pleased and which you would like to document.* (Agenda Notes)

The group generated the following two lists.

Ways to collect information:

Observations
Testing
Tape recording
Interviewing
Video tape
Anecdotal records
Questionnaire
Informal conversation
Cumulative records
Parent conferences
Conferences with friends of the student
Make lists
Tell another person
Go to the library
Health records
Ask social service agency personnel
Student teacher
Talk to another teacher

Save samples of student work
Guided recall/free association
Ask your principal
Ask the student
Observe the student doing something he/she is really good at or really enjoys
Student journals
Keep a record in your head (Meeting Notes)

Things I'd like to know:

Why did/didn't something work?
Teaching styles/learning styles
Physical environment
How space is used
What skills are required to perform a certain task?
How much am I assuming my students know before I go on?
What kinds of things are age appropriate?
How do we know what's age appropriate?
Why should we believe what someone tells us is age appropriate?
How can we change a task to make it become more age appropriate?
How can we use children's interests?
Is Billy learning anything?
Are my activities too teacher-directed?
How can I make my teaching more student-centered instead of teacher-centered?
How can I appropriate time more effectively?
How to pace the day
How to coordinate the classroom with support services
What am I educating these students for?
How can I be more effective at getting parents and the community involved so that it motivates students' work?
Are my students becoming more cooperative?
Does the task leave room for personal expression?
How fast am I accelerating to being burned out?
How can I get kids to be willing to make a guess or a risk and to value making a mistake?
How can I develop some standards of morality without imposing my own values?
Is my emphasis more on process than product?
How can you get kids to apply the skills they have in the testing situation?
How can I get students to apply what they've learned to their world knowledge?
What do I do to develop critical thinking?
What do I do to develop creative thinking?
How do you phase in and out of things?
How do you handle transitions? (Meeting Notes)

After developing and taking time to review the lists, the group discussed several of the questions in more detail. In each case they

were asked to decide, "How could we get the information we would need to answer this?" and "how would we decide when this question had been answered?"

At this stage, as participants began to develop their questions, discussions still included classroom anecdotes and teaching suggestions as well as comments focused on ways to collect and use information. The director continued for several sessions to remind participants that the agenda for the seminar was to help each other refine and carry out an investigation rather than to offer better teaching strategies. Some participants then began to share this responsibility and remind themselves and each other. By the end of the year, discussions were clearly focused on data collection.

At the time the staff felt the brainstorming session went well. In retrospect, we think we could have made much more use of the idea and of the lists which were generated. The lists were given to the participants for their information. We did not, however, return to the lists as a group to review or modify them. We now think that would have been helpful. In addition, we would now modify our procedures to include brainstorming ways to collect information in more sessions of the seminar, perhaps as topics were presented by each participant.

Selecting an Appropriate Topic

Though we saw the seminars and the opportunity for teachers to conduct investigations in their classrooms as a staff development activity as well as a research project, we did not assume that it would meet all the staff development needs of the teachers who chose to join the group. We made it clear in the early sessions that the project would not provide help in the form of expert advice or models to be adopted for curriculum planning or implementation, classroom organization or management, or other classroom issues. Our assumption was that there are many staff development programs available which are designed to help or to convince teachers to adopt particular teaching procedures or curricula. We intended to provide an opportunity less frequently available--the opportunity for them to look more carefully at their current practice with no preconceived notion of whether they should make a change or what that change might be.

It was, however, easier to state what the project was not than to say explicitly what it was. During the third session we distributed copies of the "Examples of Teachers' Initial Questions and Concerns" which had been included in the proposal. (See Appendix B.) We emphasized, however, that the examples were only that. They were some of the questions we had encountered in our previous work and were not intended to limit participants' choice of topic. We did not assume that a topic would be outside the range of the project simply because we had not anticipated it.

Early on, several teachers raised issues which required the director to rethink the limits of the project. One participant was

concerned about how to go about conducting her investigation. She believes time is the most crucial element in teaching. She wants to know how her skills as a home economics teacher can be the most useful to classroom teachers. She regrets that in twenty years of teaching she has never been asked for help. She has equipment and expertise that she feels teachers could make use of but her job as presently designed separates her in a way that she doesn't like from classroom teachers. (Her) question raises the larger question of how any specialist teacher ties in with classroom teachers. (Meeting Notes)

In that instance the director viewed the question as one which required a change in administrative policy in the school, and hence was outside the control of the teacher, rather than an instance of looking closely at one's work with students, and concluded it was outside the intent of the project. She responded quite abruptly in the seminar, however, was dissatisfied with her response, and found herself puzzling about it with another staff member between sessions.

Talked to Eleanor yesterday re (N.'s) question about investigating how an economics teacher can be helpful to other people in the building. Investigation of administrative questions was not part of which I had in mind. So, what are the ground rules? Is this a new interesting idea which we hadn't previously thought of or is it outside the definition of the project?

I suppose this will be a question which comes up often. We certainly don't want to do only those things we were able to think of in advance. On the other hand, we do have an idea of what the project is and isn't about. At this point there doesn't seem to be a way to specify clearly in advance. Hard to know how to clarify, to define (or make explicit) until one has examples and interpretations from other people.

Re (N.'s) question: As a result of the conversation with Eleanor yesterday I decided I don't yet have enough information to decide and that one of the questions to keep in mind is whether she would be likely to put other people in the position of being "subjects." Do the other teachers freely agree to participate or to "be studied."

One of my first reactions in thinking about the question and in talking with Eleanor was that the idea of the seminar is to look at one's own work with students--either by looking at oneself, or at the students or the interaction. (Director's Notes on Seminar)

The next week, in reading the journal entires, the director found that one of the other participants confirmed her impression that she had been too hasty:

N. seems to be groping for a project focus. I wonder how we can help her. It seems to me that Claryce cut her off last week. How did I get that impression? I must listen to the tape to see

what really happened. (Journal)

The following week the incident was discussed in the seminar with a statement from the director that there were still some questions in mind regarding how best to specify the guidelines for the projects and that she hoped to do a better job in the future of having those conversations with the group.

Other problematic topics arose later and were included in the project. A teacher who was interested in changing her practice through the introduction of computers--rather than looking at her current practice--was provided with documentation for that "experiment." A teacher who was frustrated by the lack of services for special needs students was provided with typing services and feedback on drafts of a handbook which she hoped to distribute to other teachers in her system.

A kindergarten teacher who was planning to investigate the effects of teachers' expectations on students' performance informed the group that one of the students in her room was ill and was expected to die before the end of the school year. She asked for time in the group to discuss the stress she was experiencing from this unexpected situation, as well as time to discuss her project, and was given a few minutes at the end of each session to discuss her experiences of the week and the questions confronting her. Initially her request was granted by staff and participants alike out of concern for her and the emotional strain she was experiencing although it seemed unrelated to any investigation she might do. Later she found that her concern for the child, the other students in the class, the family and the response of the school made it more sensible to focus on that as her investigation rather than to try to give attention to her original, less immediate issue.

The lack of clarity of the range of topics which were considered appropriate by the staff and the inexperience of the teachers in conducting investigations led to some delay and confusion in defining topics.

> *The first months were a little foggy. I was foggy about my direction and what procedures to follow, etc. Now after coming full cycle on one topic and embarking on another, it's not as nebulous, and I will be able to get more out of it.* (Interview)

> *I think everyone was in the same case as me; we were not sure what was expected, what do you want us to do, what we are supposed to be doing. Also, we were gearing up for Christmas. Plus people are more comfortable about talking about ideas now, and we see support can be helpful.* (Interview)

> *No one knew what we'd gotten into. How to begin, it took time to feel it out and people were being busy. I got feeling comfortable, thinking and clarifying and so on until Claryce said, "How about starting this week?" [She said that] to me. She came over. She felt that if someone would start then other people would.* (Interview)

At the beginning it was slow. Now it's more obvious what she wanted. Teacher-initiated research. That was clear, but our meeting, what were we supposed to get out of that? So I thought it was going to be a course--"She'll tell us what it's supposed to be about." But then we all started becoming professionals. In my school too many teachers don't care. There's no spirit of inquiry, you just do courses to get a certificate. It's nice to meet people who are inquiring, asking questions. A lot of teachers don't want to continue on getting involved. I didn't have this expectation for the other teachers or maybe it's because Claryce was to be the professional person. I still have the student syndrome--you're not taken seriously. I thought it would be a class; that's why I found it slow at first. (Interview)

[A weakness is] how long it took us as a group to realize what the research process is. If it had been made more clear, we might have accelerated it. In Christine's paper it became clear this is what the expectations were. This is why it's important. Maybe the way they did it seems like it was a long way around. If Claryce had articulated her methods so we could understand it maybe it would have led to controversy....but for me it would have helped. Maybe she didn't want to. I felt I was floundering. What was the purpose, and why couldn't I give suggestions? I trusted her but I didn't know why we couldn't give suggestions. It came from years of thought on her part, I'm sure. (Interview)

Later in the year, it was suggested by the staff that new people be admitted. The consensus of the teachers was that that would be a mistake because it would disrupt the group cohesion and because new people would take too long to understand what was going on.

In general, people felt that it had taken quite a bit of time to come to terms with what the project was all about. People were skeptical of others being able to reach the level of thinking that people are operating on now without having spent an equivalent amount of time "getting there." In addition, people expressed concern about the kinds of difficulties that they had encountered in other group situations where newcomers had tried to join a group that had already solidified. (Meeting Notes)

We are left with the conclusion that until teachers have more frequent access to programs of this nature there is no way to prevent some confusion and that working through the confusion and accepting responsibility for defining one's own goals and procedures is part of the learning process involved.

People didn't have clear questions. The flailing about was an important part of the process. I think it's really important perhaps not to do something different at the beginning. (Interview)

Nevertheless, there are some things which we now think could be done

to facilitate this learning and the full participation of the teachers. Some of the changes we would recommend are discussed in other sections of this report. In addition to those, we agree with the participants and would recommend presenting examples of research that teachers have done to complement the talk about the idea in the early sessions of the seminar.

> *At the beginning it should have been made clearer so we didn't waste a few months. Probably as we said in the seminar, the easiest way is to give examples of projects, a real variety--and a warning not to be confined to these.* (Interview)

Help for Teachers in Need

Another dilemma arose in our project as a result of the focus on helping teachers through helping them gather more information about their practice rather than giving more immediate assistance. Two of the teachers confronted difficult situations and seemed to need assistance in the form of expert help in coping with them. We faced the decision of whether to use project funds to provide consultant time to teachers for other than design of investigations or data collection. In the case mentioned earlier of the kindergarten teacher with a terminally ill child, the teacher was able to use the group discussions to clarify the type of assistance which she required and then to seek and obtain it in her own system.

In another instance, a teacher was concentrating on the behavior of her students and one disruptive child in particular. By chance, the day in the seminar she first strongly expressed the discouragement she felt with the lack of progress she was making with the student, and hence with the class, was the day of our first pot-luck party. At the party she met a consultant to schools who uses his training in family therapy to assist teachers coping with disruptive students in their classrooms. After learning about his work she asked him what he could suggest regarding her classroom. He explained his approach to such problems and suggested that he be hired to work in her room. We were then faced with a request for help from the teacher, who had been unable to get appropriate assistance in her school system. We hesitated, but decided at a staff meeting that we would provide the consultant help if the teacher and consultant agreed to present a plan and report on the results of the intervention to the seminar group. Later when the director discussed the decision and the reason for the hesitation with the teacher, she said she had thought more about it and didn't feel really comfortable with the idea that someone else would come to her room to intervene with her class. She chose to continue with her own documentation and later had observations done in her room.

Though we think it was important in starting this work with teachers to make clear the intent of the project and the types of assistance available, we think this dilemma was unavoidable. In any group of teachers who start the year with particular projects in mind--whether based on research, curriculum or instructional procedures--there will be

some who find they have unexpected, pressing issues which do not match their original plans.

THE MIDDLE MONTHS

The period of time from December through March was one of growth and development within the seminar. Staff meetings were being held more regularly and more sustained discussion of the progress of the project and of the individual teachers took place than during the earlier sessions. Group cohesion was growing. Interaction was comfortable and respectful, the guidelines were being followed, and people appeared to enjoy coming. There were, however, strains and pressures on the teachers which affected their participation.

INFLUENCES ON THE TEACHERS AND THE PROCESS

Our own experiences as teachers and teacher educators had made us aware of the stresses and frustrations of working daily in public schools. The effects on teachers of the problems which they face are too rarely considered as they are rarely documented and made public. Yet they are an important part of the reality which curriculum developers, researchers and administrators need to take into account if their work is to have a positive influence on schools.

During the middle months of the seminar, which were also the middle months of the school year, the teachers often wrote in their journals about their daily experiences. Some of those journal entries are included here as they highlight the life of the teachers and demonstrate the context in which the teachers were attempting to carry out research.

> *I called B.T. this week and made an appointment to see him to discuss my research project.*
>
> *Not too much else going--I feel pressured and harassed: New desks in school. Mandatory alcohol-awareness meetings take two full school days within a week's time. Kids are high--what with Halloween. My concentration is off.*
>
> *My students are such delightful kids. I saw a few at a nearby luncheonette. Soon several other smiling faces were at the door. Again I see how pleased I am with this friendly group. Feeling this way when otherwise depressed shows it certainly isn't the kids.*
>
> *I wonder if anxiety about Proposition 2½ (the Massachusetts tax cap) and all the threats from it aren't behind this feeling of unpleasant anticipation.* (Journal)

The teachers I have to work with are so lacking in integrity that I get really discouraged. I know this is a value judgement on my part--but I feel depressed about it.

Parent conferences--talk about "slinging the bull." I blame the principal but even if he did perceive this problem as I do--What could he do? Maybe it's my problem and not theirs--I wish I knew.

B.'s mother is here--Talk about ignoring a person's self-esteem. Phew! I'm writing in this notebook right now so I won't scream.

The principal just entered. Now I can't leave. Now they're blaming an absent teacher. (Journal)

My class today--17 people present out of 24.

Did you ever wonder why the students in (this system) are low achievers (in general)?

Today, during my reading/language arts class, students left for the following reasons:

1) *student council meeting*
2) *band practice (and music lessons)*
3) *cheerleading*
4) *track team*
5) *basketball team* *I AM NOT KIDDING!* (Journal)

Dear Claryce,

In answer to your question concerning why I haven't written in my journal--I guess the major reason is that I haven't had much of importance to write about. Class and school have been uneventful. I really haven't been questioning much about why my students achieve or don't achieve. I suppose my most active periods of investigation come in the first few months of school. By the end of the school I've stopped trying to figure out "Why," so much, and start concentrating on surviving the rest of the year.

Anyway, since the results of the tests have come back, I've been quite excited. My spirits have been boosted looking at their improvement. I think I'm the only teacher in the system who uses (my approach). It started out as an experiment but I'm glad I tried it. (Journal)

Friday
Busy, filled day--non-stop--draining!!!

8:20 - 9:10 *Students: L., K., K. Gr. 7*
--out to photography store, observe variety of equipment--First experience for all 3.

Cemetary--allow the girls opportunity to shoot pictures of cement, granite, marble sculptures (figures, mausoleums, monuments)

**So nice and crisp out--kids love being out*

of the school building--interaction is personal unlike formality in room.

9:15 - Drop girls off--go directly to elementary--sign in--meet with Gr. 6 teacher--to discuss scenery for Xmas play--draw diagrams, suggest materials, time possibility

9:45 - 10:15 Write 3 articles for newspaper to include 2 photos each (picked up that morning), 2 paragraphs, type (over weekend)

Gulp coffee

Articles (1) N.E. Aquarium field trip
(2) Interior Design lesson Gr. 9
(3) Photography class darkroom tech.

10:20 - (1) Run downstairs--4 students Gr. 5. Meet with small group to design costumes and props for "Headless Horseman Play" to be conducted in classroom.

--took several photos while students were working to enable us to use it for public relations for art program and classroom teacher.

10:35 - 11:15 Overlapping classes!--Gr. 2 class arrives.

--Introduce unit on Indians, begin lesson on blanket patterns.

Rotate between group (Gr. 5) and Grade 2. Much commotion! But good drawings with line variations and limited color

11:15 - 11:25 Clean-up with Gr. 5 group--allow work to dry until 1:00--resume then

This is absolutely ridiculous to spread oneself so thinly--

11:25 - 12:10 Grade 5. Mrs. M.'s class--
Continued double lessons on Dinosaurs and Serpentine Creatures and Name Game collages.

*So keyed up--She warned me they were in HIGH GEAR--Had to use the scare tactic--wrote down phone No.'s and threatened to call at 5:00 tonight.

It stopped for a while--but undercurrent was annoying.

12:20 - 12:50 --Lunch--So crazy up there--one teacher made a cake for another--in actuality it was a frosted card-board box--everyone that entered teachers' room had their chance to be made a fool of--doing the honors of cutting the cake!

1:00 - 1:50 5th grade
Commotion ! ! ! ! The 4 students continued on prop design--a little resentment by the rest of the group but virtually impossible to include all since it

must be finished by next Thursday.

--Introduced lesson with partners--to work on sharing skills and interaction--they need this!!

So noisy!

1:55 - 2:00 Clean room, organize desk.

WEEK-END ! ! ! ! ! (Journal)

Morale suffering from
(1) no more supplies and books--freeze on buying
(2) rumors of a system-wide shutdown on the schools
(3) possible layoffs
(4) flu season. (Journal)

I have suffered with a pinched nerve since Dec. 25, and being back at school has been a pain. Therefore, I am not sure how unbiased my comments may be. I get impatient or irritable very easily.

About P.: Today someone (R.) accused her of throwing corn. It happened at lunchtime, of course--really the worst time for my kids. My lunch mother is totally ineffective. Apparently P. started yelling with anger and frustration. Lunch mother calls lunch manager. Lunch manager comes in--yelling--calls P. a bitch. P. is insulted, calls lunch manager a pig. So here we have two feisty women: one age 58, one age 8, yelling insults at each other.

I return from my lunch, feeling considerable discomfort, and find P. sobbing, R. self-righteous. No one thinks P. was throwing corn, though everyone admits that corn was flying through the air. As I try to get information, P. keeps making threats about what she'll do to R., to which R. makes her own counter-threats. I counsel P. not to talk anymore because she is only making things worse. "You can't tell me not to talk," says she.

Meanwhile, another class is waiting to come to me for their science lesson. P. says she will not go anywhere that R. is going.

I tell P. that she can either go to Language Arts or to the office. She refuses either option. I go to the phone and call office. No one answers. I go to Language Arts teacher and explain problem. She suggests I keep P. with me.

So I did, and she was great during the whole period. When R. comes back, P. was the first to go and talk to her happily. Wouldn't you know?

I worked with P. on math for about 30 minutes yesterday and she loved it, was very responsive, and seemed to understand. I felt good about that.

What is P. doing when she is not being disruptive? Today, in another class's science lesson, she was working hard. Yes-

terday in math, she was working hard. She has weak reading skills. So she needs help in some reading of directions but seems to catch on quickly when she understands.

I am not up to having an observer until I feel some reduction in pain. Although an observer would be looking at kids, I know things are not quite the same. I do not create the same environment when I am ill. (1/9/81)

Right now I am primarily concerned about R. She is really getting to me, so I must be allowing it. I hope by writing about her I can gain some insights. I come home every afternoon exhausted from trying to deal with her.

She came in today, angry and yelling, bossing kids around, and upsetting everyone. No one wants to sit beside her, and a child who volunteered last week (because R. was in tears over my choice for her) came today to ask to change. Another girl volunteered at 9:30, and by 3 she was asking for another seat. As much as possible I try to ignore her or let the kids work it out among themselves. But at least 3 or 4 times a day, it either gets so loud or so violent that I must intervene.

I am angry because I feel that some of the difficulty comes from home. Her mother accepts very little responsibility for setting limits or teaching respect for people and property. R. is frequently left to put herself to bed, and I suspect that today was so bad because she stayed up very late last night. She takes things like pencils from my desk or from other kids without asking--then denies it. She is in need of a new pencil daily, unless she has already taken one from someone else. When I write notes home about these behaviors, her mother writes back that I'm not rewarding her enough for good behavior. I should use more stickers or candies.

Mother requires nothing of her like cleaning her room or helping the family. She is left alone much of the time --unsupervised play. When I send home a good report (not very often) she is rewarded with a new toy or record. When I send home a bad report, I get back these notes that I am not rewarding extrinsically the good behaviors.

Today I wonder if I will ever experience a good day (by my standards) unless she is absent. Of course, R. is rarely ill. In fact, her mother sends her to school some days when she is clearly not well.

P., M. and D. are each triggered by R. My room isn't big enough to arrange seating which separates all the people she upsets from her. I already have her sitting at the back -- alone for most of the time. The insurmountable problem is her voice--she does truly yell most of the time. Her first response to any direction from me is to yell that I can't make her do anything. That is true--if she doesn't want to, she won't do it. I can't make her. All I can do is try to make her want to. I avoid confrontation, I usually give in to her. Everyone knows this--

some, like P., are very angry because, as she says, "You always give R. her own way."

Meanwhile how to start my research? (1/21/81)

Most of them are irresponsible about care of school materials. Many do not take finished papers home. Is that because no one takes any interest in them? Or do the kids take pride in completed work?...

Maybe I could begin by helping them to become more responsible for things. Then we could move to behaviors. No, that's backwards. Behaviors first.

One of the facts about being responsible is accepting the consequences of your actions and speech. Maybe there is not enough reward for acting appropriately, and no negative consequences for acting inappropriately.

And what do I do about the speaking? In a class, where at least half the children need to spend so much time insulting one another, how can I intervene before the insult is spoken?

If each child felt better about him/herself, would the insults and put-downs decrease? (2/8/81)

Yesterday a variation of a recent problem came up. The kids are doing gymnastics now. So every time they come from gym, I have a rash of injuries--usually hand, wrist or arm--so they cannot participate in handwriting, which comes next. And you've guessed it--it's usually P., M. and R. who start it. Then others get the idea.

I'd really like to write something about this year, but I have lost my focus. Right now the only thing I could write about is the year I changed from teacher to policeman and how it forced me out of teaching. Help! (Journal)

In addition to the normal pressure of teaching, events in the larger social context created more confusion and strain than usual. A tax cap referendum was passed in Massachusetts in November 1980. From then until the end of the school year, the enormous impact of this measure on schools was felt by many of the seminar participants. Seven members of the seminar learned that they would have no jobs the following year. Many other participants lived with the possibility that they might lose their jobs and all of them with the knowledge that talented colleagues were being fired and that unfortunate decisions were being made which would influence the professional lives of teachers and their efforts to help children.

In addition, the Boston school system was undergoing a separate financial crisis and was repeatedly reported to be about to close. Beginning in March all Boston teachers lived with the possibility that 11 schools would be closed or that their own schools or classes would be altered as a cost-cutting measure. At one session one participant reported that she had done no work on her questionnaire that

week as her classes had been reorganized when the staff in her building had been reduced. After the middle of the school year, she had to begin again with new classes which contained many students who had not been in any of her previous classes and which, in some cases, exceeded forty students. The school's attempt to group students homogeneously by performance had been disrupted, adding to her difficulties.

One of the participants was a person from El Salvador who had been a political activist and had escaped from his country when his university was closed. His pain at the events in his country was strong; when he informed the group of the reason for his late arrival one week and his slightly distracted manner recently, they shared the pain with him. For many participants it was a reminder of their activities in opposition to the U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and of their desire for public policies in support of education and other social programs.

The group did not devote much time to agonizing over these issues. Originally, discussions of events beyond our control had been declared out-of-bounds for seminar sessions. Recognizing the effects on the teachers of loss of jobs or the prospect of working in underfunded schools, the staff proposed a possible change in policy--that some time be given for people to describe their situations and express their feelings of loss. The group responded by noting that

> *the seminar was a place to get some work done, where one didn't have to confront the gloom. In the teachers' room, people are saturated with the problems of teaching in today's world. To address issues like 2½ (the tax cap) in the seminar would not be constructive but would serve to weigh people down even more.* (Meeting Notes)

Instead, participants sometimes reported in passing, and laughed over, the more bizarre and illogical decisions of administrators and school systems in response to the crisis. The laughter helped release the tension and then the work of the seminar continued.

The seminar was affected in two visible ways by the economic and political context--the attendance rate and the drop-out rate from the seminar. Of the fifteen participants who began, four left the seminar. One left after only four sessions. She had a different set of expectations about the nature of research. She explained:

> *(The seminar didn't meet my needs because) I wanted to prove some of what I know about what would work. The mechanics of statistical analysis of classroom behavior, for example. Most of the others want help in solving problems. I've solved problems; I want proof. If problems remain, I want research to have concrete analysis. I am in control in the classroom; I don't need help there. I need help with other things I can't control.* (Interview)

A second left with regrets after six sessions because of a financial crisis which changed her family responsibilities. Two others left as a direct result of the Massachusetts tax cap. Having been informed that they would not be rehired for the next school year, one teacher enrolled in a career change course to train for a new occupation and the other took a second job.

Attendance became less regular for some people. In early February, when five people (out of the twelve then participating) were absent, one teacher raised the issue of attendance, indicating that she was distressed and disappointed by the lack of continuity and commitment. The topic was then discussed by the group.

> *As we discussed this, people expressed a variety of feelings. One person felt that when people missed seminars, they were the ones missing something. For her, the meetings are stimulating and that's why she tries to attend. Others mentioned that those attending also missed out because those in attendance didn't have the benefit of input from those absent. (M.) feels that attending the meetings is a priority and she has blocked out that time in her schedule so that she doesn't make other appointments or go to other meetings on Thursday afternoons. Only an emergency would prevent her from coming. (P.) has been feeling like she's spending a lot of time at the end of the day working to clean up in her classroom and get organized for the next day. She has been reluctant to come late, but has done so and was reassured by those present that coming late was much preferred to not coming at all. On top of this, she has been attending lots of meetings about 2½ (the tax cap). She wondered whether or not others too were finding their time taken up with 2½ business. (J.) couldn't attend today because she was at a career change workshop. Two of the original members of the seminar dropped out, partially because of issues relating to 2½.* (Meeting Notes)

The decision of the group was to take attendance more seriously and to notify the secretary in advance, by telephone, when absent. In the final evaluation session, they reiterated the crucial nature of this commitment.

> *At a staff meeting you have to come. You come to this because you make the commitment yourself.* (Meeting Notes)

> *We talked about commitment to coming to the group and that was good. Somehow it was good that that didn't happen at the beginning. That talk has helped us keep going.* (Meeting Notes)

SOCIAL EVENTS

Several colleagues and friends of the staff requested permission to attend one or more of the seminar sessions. Since that seemed likely to disrupt the process, no observers (other than Davis) were

permitted to attend. One colleague, who was particularly interested in knowing more about the issues which teachers were choosing to investigate, offered a soup and salad party at his home (which was near the meeting place for the seminar) in order to have an opportunity to meet and talk with them. The party was held in February following a regular meeting of the seminar. This proved to be an important event in the life of the group. Those who attended commented that they welcomed the opportunity to become better acquainted in a social setting and would have liked such events much earlier.

After that party, the group organized a potluck supper in March and another at the home of one of the teachers one week after the final seminar session. We now think such social events should have been held earlier in the year to facilitate more informal discussion to complement and assist the task-oriented talk of the seminars.

ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE STAFF

Teachers' Use of Observers and Interviewers

During this time individual projects were also taking shape, but more slowly than we anticipated. Though we were pleased with the tone and quality of the interactions of the discussions in the seminar, we were puzzled that teachers were slow to define the information which was most likely to be useful to them and to take advantage of the opportunity to have observers or interviewers come to their schools. In the summer program which had been one of the major sources for the design of the project, teachers had joined the group knowing explicitly that they would have observers in the room. Based on that experience, we had prepared a list of former teachers and graduate students who were available to the seminar participants.

In this project, however, teachers had signed up to carry out research, using observers if they wished, but with a wider range of possibilities and, hence, more need for decision-making or preparation on their part.

With the hope of increasing the pace of individual investigations and facilitating better teacher research, we discussed the progress of each participant at each staff meeting, increased our personal contact through telephone calls and conferences, and began distributing drafts of articles and reports of observations and interviews to all participants. Even so, it was not until the end of January that all participants had scheduled themselves for extended discussions with the group on their topics of investigation. It seemed that the participants needed time to know each other, the project and its process, and to assimilate the idea that <u>they</u> would be carrying out research.

We now think, given their inexperience with formalizing their knowledge of their classrooms and extending it through data collection, that it would have been helpful to ask each person to make a schedule for the year's work early in the year.

We also think that the rate of use of the observers and other available data collectors relates in part to the teachers' inexperience--unless you know what information you already have, what you would like to know and can find out by yourself, or what an outside person might be able to tell you, it is difficult to make use of assistance.

Even though teachers moved slowly to schedule observers and interviewers, used them less than we anticipated, and sometimes expressed some nervousness about the prospect, the response of those who used them was positive. They viewed their classroom or particular children in new ways and became more observant themselves.

> *I was a little nervous [about having the interviewer for my project come]. All the ideas seemed interesting to think about, but to have someone come in you have to know what you're doing. In the second year some of the people from the first year will get started and it will demystify it.* (Interview)

> *There was a push toward observation. Did it come from Claryce and Peggy, or from a new thing being available? [What new thing?] Observers! This was a new exciting thing for all of us. We could all understand that--have someone come in and observe, have someone come in so you can observe. . . . Yes, [in that it opened up possibilities] and important ones.* (Interview)

> *[The contribution of the observations in my class has been that] she can pinpoint something that I can analyze. It's useful. And videotaping is brand new. I will need more observing.* (Interview)

> *What have I learned by having an observer?*
> 1. *It has sharpened my own skills as participant-observer.*
> 2. *It has made me aware that it is not so much the actions of the children as their words to each other which trigger the trouble.* (Journal)

> *When the interviewer came I would have loved to do it myself, even with students I don't know. My own I think I could interview also. I'd like to learn the ways of asking questions to get at the right answer. I don't know [how you learn that]. You do it. You read something.* (Interview)

> *It's a new tool for all of us--teachers learning to be better observers is valuable. It was new to have someone come and look and talk to you about what they saw. Visitors that I had had before didn't sit down with me afterwards. It's a good method of sparking more observation in our own classroom. . , . When A.M. did the interviews I could have guessed at a lot of what she found, some of it was new, some of it was a new perspective on a child. But I got thinking in those terms. . . other than the kinds of specific teaching skills. . . . But the more you pursue it the better teacher you become over a longer term.* (Interview)

J.W. had an observer come to her classroom last week. She told the children that someone would be coming to watch what was happening in the classroom and that she would be talking with the person about what she saw so that she could use the information gathered to help her be a better teacher. The children were totally accepting of this plan though some of them expressed some disappointment over the fact that the visitor wasn't going to be a student teacher. J.W. set aside some time during snack time for the children to ask the observer some questions about herself. This seemed to give them the chance they needed to interact with her. During the time she was observing, the children carried on as usual, unaffected by her presence. J.W. had asked S., the observer, to watch one child in particular, B. As far as J.W. could tell, B. was not aware of S.'s focusing on her in particular. S. was was able to observe B. as she worked with J.W. and under the direction of two other teachers as well.

Though there wasn't much time to talk with S. about what she had seen, J.W. did learn that B. seemed to be much more relaxed when working with either of the other two teachers than she was when working with J.W. J.W. wants to think more carefully about what she is doing to add to the tension between her and B. She knows that B. is tense in part because J.W. is also directing her attention to managing another child, M., and that problems arise when J.W. is caught between the two of them. She wants to look further at whether B.'s problem originates with M. or J.W. and she wants to know more about the dynamics that occur when she has to settle disputes between the two of them. In thinking about what the observer said, J.W. also realized that the other two teachers with whom B. worked that day had very well defined tasks for the children to do. She's not quite sure what to make of this thought at this point. She is eager to have the written report so that she can continue to think about B.

J.W. felt that simply the presence of an observer made her think more about her actions in the classroom. She felt as though she were on stage and that she was looking at herself perform, even though the observer was looking at a particular child. She was more an observer of her own behavior and of what else was happening in the room because the observer was there. Rather than feeling self-conscious about being "on stage" J.W. was excited about this new role that she found herself taking. She likened it to the sharpened level of awareness that one has about one's performance when any new visitor comes into the room.

When the observer comes again, J.W. will ask her to observe a different child and to observe J.W. more closely as well. (Meeting Notes)

There were some problems associated with the use of the observers. Though some teachers appreciated hearing the reports of others' classrooms, others found them uninformative. In addition, some teachers felt some unease with this "luxury" or felt they ought not to "need" one, or did not see how they would be of help. We now think we did not provide sufficient structure to guide them in their use of observers. As a result, in some cases the best results were not gained from the observations because the teacher's instructions were not clear enough, although this lessened as the year progressed.

> *The reports of observers [are another good feature]. They're really beneficial. [Because of] what I can infer about the organization of the classroom, how children interact, what's going on. One teacher was disappointed. I thought hers wasn't as bad as some others. Some of the things that kids say to interviewers just represent a second or a minute of their thoughts. After things are explained, there's a different picture. For example, kids said that the teacher yelled a lot and then the teacher explained that she has a very soft voice so what they meant was when she scolded them. [Hearing from the observations about] having fish tanks appeals to the elementary teacher in me. Gerbils and record players.* (Interview)

> *Still, I've missed not knowing a little more about the other classes. Some of the observations have brought it out. For example, the observations of (a student) in J.W.'s class.* (Interview)

> *No, [I didn't need an observer]. I have felt in the last few weeks when I hear observers being discussed, I think the observers should be involved in the seminar. If they go in cold without the context of the seminar I don't know if it helps much. One of them came to the seminar two or three times. From hearing her speak, I felt she was compatible. But people can't come in off the street and observe because there are so many levels of seeing. The observer is not necessarily seeing what the teacher had in mind for them to see. If a person came to my class I'd want to talk about what's important to me. I don't see how to do that with someone you haven't met before. . . . I haven't discussed it with the people in the group but in reading through the observations I'm bored or I can't get the focus or it's dry or they leave a lot out. I don't know more than before I read. . . . I don't think observing is that easy. There are so many ways you can observe the same thing.* (Interview)

> *[My next project] is another phase. This is life-long. I may turn up something or not. . . . I hoped I'd be better than I am myself and wouldn't need an observer. That's not true.* (Interview)

Having a typist available was good; and to be able to have interviewers and observers, without asking for favors. (Interview)

No, [I haven't thought of using an observer]. What would they do, watch the kids fill out the papers? But we're supposed to go over them with them to figure out what they put and why they put it. If one kid explains what he put, how can we make sure the other kids are listening? An observer might watch who was attending to the explanation. (Interview)

I wanted to introduce [the observers] ahead of time but I didn't use them as teachers. They kept running notes.

[They observed] things about myself and how I interacted. They watched different groups. They were basically running notes. One had more of herself in it, the other had less clear subjectiveness, one had marginal notes about her subjective reactions. I preferred that. They had to leave each day before I was free to talk to them but we sometimes spoke on the telephone later. [I saw the notes] after it was all over. If I was doing it another time, looking at the notes during the time would have been helpful. I didn't ask for them. I didn't feel comfortable. I wasn't sure I wanted to see them, not knowing the people. And I just didn't think about it. I felt comfortable about how it was going so I didn't have any anxiety to see what they were writing. It was all going to come to me in the end. It was like using people like a secretary for their skills. I'm not used to delegating responsibility like that. . . .

Specific guidelines for research might have helped. I don't know how to make that relevant--how to tell the observers to give you the notes at the end of the day. (Interview)

We noted that the observers were relative strangers to the teachers' projects. They were selected and scheduled by the teacher after the project was formulated and reshaped and had to understand the teacher's intentions from a conference. That made it difficult for them to engage fully with those intentions. The staff considered the possibility that in future work the observers might be in the group so they would see the evolution of the teachers' investigations before entering the classrooms and so they would know and would be known by the teachers. This would enlarge the group, however, and might overload it with non-investigators--which could be dysfunctional.

There is also the dilemma of whether it is preferable to have a stranger or a person who is already known to the teachers. Although it is hard to accomodate an outsider in the classroom--which is traditionally the preserve of the teacher--a stranger who then disappears may offer less risk than someone who continues as a colleague.

Overall, we would recommend that the observers be included in the process much more than we were able to do. This might be achieved through maintaining a small pool of observers who met regularly with staff and occasionally attended seminar sessions.

Diversity

Another question we were considering at this time was whether the advantages of having a diverse group of teachers in the seminar were outweighed by the disadvantages. Recognizing that the diversity in type of schools, age of students, style of teaching, and topics of investigation sometimes made it difficult for participants to respond to each other, we decided to include questions on that issue in the second interview. In addition, many of the participants mentioned it in response to questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the project in the second and third interviews.

> *[This seminar has stretched] my thinking about what happens in elementary schools, the transition from 5th grade to 6th grade. The kids are freer and not restricted, there's a natural flow in the younger grades that helps me understand 6th graders when I get them. The first time the teachers looked at Cloze they seemed to have lesser expectations but maybe that's because they had younger kids. I see they're not as slow as I thought. N.R. subbed in my class and she found they were terrific. Maybe I'm spoiled. Maybe I expect too much. They are really doing well. I'm not giving them credit. That's changing, I'm starting to give them credit for what they do. . . .*
>
> *[The diversity of the group] is an advantage. There's diversity in the urban and suburban and in the grades. It could be more diverse in more minorities and men. It's an advantage because we're getting a lot of different viewpoints about the same thing. If we were all from Boston I could see us all crabbing and sharing horror stories and all doing similar things. No, [there isn't diversity as teachers]. By the fact that they're there, it shows they're interested, concerned, they want new ideas, they're open.* (Interview)
>
> *I find it consoling to speak to people in other systems and see we don't have all the problems. I think [the diversity was worth the difficulties in communication]. My criticism of teachers of higher grades is that they don't think about how children learn. I think it's important to see kids through from K to 8. Breaking them up into buildings by ages--we create our own problems. There's a greater understanding of what the progression is. It's valuable to see what teachers of higher grades expect and what the teachers of lower grades know they've done that hasn't taken.*
>
> *[The Boston-suburban mix was] very positive. It's important for us to hear people do have the same problems. We feel very isolated and very beaten down. . . . It's not that I'm glad*

they're having an awful time, but it says that we're not the only ones. (Interview)

[I think the diversity of the group] is an advantage. Otherwise it would be the teachers' room syndrome. If you all have the same situation you tend to see only the drawbacks of it. Even if [the diversity in the views of the teachers has slowed things down], the results have been more beneficial. Now that everybody is talking I think we'll benefit more. [I think it's more beneficial because] in Boston it's parochial. There are problems because there aren't enough different points of view. To be exposed to other points of view, even if you think they're ridiculous, is better. Teachers go to Boston schools, then to Boston State College and then back to the Boston schools. It's a cycle. Everyone gets rigid. They don't change their views. . . .

[One of the best features of the seminar is] hearing about what's happening in the suburbs. We think that's heaven and we're in hell. We hear they have the same problems. (Interview)

I often felt I didn't know about what people were talking about to ask specific questions to help them focus. There was a terrific range. That's not necessarily a handicap. [But], I felt that as an art specialist I couldn't ask questions which could lead them on. Maybe a smaller age range [would have been better]. The middle school is older kids than I'm used to dealing with. Probably, [if there were another group the makeup should be more limited]. [Would you think there could be a different way of having less diversity?] Boston people were in chaos and desperation. The others felt it less acutely. . . . It's hard to say. Everything seems like an exception this year--a completely non-normal year. (Interview)

There hasn't been time taken to talk about [the diversity of the group]. If we took time to talk about what we want and what's important to us there would be jarring dialogue and it would be pretty exciting. For example, at the party I talked with (one of the participants) about why she decided to be a teacher. It was fascinating, our different assumptions. For her, teaching was a way out of living in the projects. It was a solid, middle-class job. Now she has to restructure her assumption about what you do with your life and what's valuable. When she started, teaching meant security, both financially and by being dependable and ongoing. For me, I never considered teaching. I came into it by accident. I found that I enjoyed it. [The diversity] could have become a great plus but it hasn't been utilized. There had to be a focus and research was the focus that was chosen. It's not a fault or a problem. Most people are there because that's what they wanted to do. . . .

The Boston people [are one of the things that I appreciate in the seminar]. Everyone is suffering from 2 1/2, the conflicts

there. The bureaucracy shapes everything you do and yet there is a concrete day-to-day feeling about kids that you work with every day. (One participant) was enraged at the non-English speaking kids being taken out and put in a special class. De facto segregation of the Oriental kids. They were taken away from their language models and social role models. I feel great sympathy with people trying to deal in a humane way with a system imposing decisions like that on you without your knowing why. (Interview)

Another weakness is that there are not enough males. It would change the nature of the thinking of the group. Relationships develop in a different way. Society has taught women to behave in a special way. It has been helpful to me to be the only male. I'm not complaining about that but it would have been helpful to have a mixed group. Men, because of society, when they are looking at students and at their class, they relate to children differently. Especially in my school. The disciplinarians are only males. Society doesn't give women a chance yet in those strong roles. I'm not sexist. It would have been good to have two or three sexists. I didn't find someone to put me down immediately. I wanted more discussion, more heated discussion. I wanted a discussion where everything I said was torn down and I would have to go home and think it all over and make it better. It was too soft. This Thursday Christine made the best comments yet. "Wait a minute, F.R. Let's be clear." I needed more aggression and I was afraid of being aggressive, of offending their hearts. A male mix would have made a difference towards women and towards female students. I think I was very sexist before. (Interview)

[The best aspect of the seminar so far is] talking to teachers from other systems about things that are really important to them. That's a luxury. [It is better than talking to teachers in my own system because] the teachers are in very different situations but the concerns are similar to all teachers. I've often thought about the teachers in Boston and I never met any before. They are thoughtful and concerned and dealing with the same issues. The settings are very different, building, equipment, number of kids, I really enjoy that diversity. . . .

[The diversity of this group] has been an advantage, I guess. I've been teaching ten years in (my system) and the teachers are all like me. The diversity is more stimulating, though in some ways it slows you down. There are different levels of sophistication. Some people are concerned about something I was concerned about three or four years ago and now I'm on to another thing. But since I'm focused on the process it's not a drawback. (Interview)

I didn't think [the diversity] was a hindrance at all. It was just a plus. It's good to have to describe what you're doing to the diverse group. It meant you had to be clearer.

People's different experiences led to different things they would think about and ask you to think about. (Interview)

[The diversity] was a good balance. We could have used more men. I don't find it valid [to say it made it hard to communicate]. The Boston teachers, that was very good for me. (Interview)

I would keep the diversity, that's important. . . . Some times were not as interesting as others. Some things were not as interesting to me, but it was never bad. . . . Both the age range, and the sorts of places. It's interesting to hear people talk about other situations. (Interview)

Though we now would provide more structure to assure that people understand others' settings, would arrange to use a space which would facilitate small group work during part of the seminar time, and would place more social functions earlier in the year to allow for more informal exchanges, we believe with the participants that the diversity of the group was an important strength of the project.

In addition, we believe--as was suggested to us when we made an interim report of the project at the February meeting of the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation--that:

The conversion issue may be easier to handle when you have a wide variety in the group. If people's practice is very close to each other's then they may think that with a few words they can get someone else to change. If the practice is very different, then it may be easier for people to realize it is more appropriate to try to help the other person do what she wants to do.(Notes to the Teacher-initiated Research Project participants on the presentation to the NDSGE)

Should It Be School-based?

Another question we posed for ourselves was whether teachers would prefer to participate in such seminars in their own schools and under what conditions that would be effective. We asked them about this question in the second set of interviews. We also asked, in those interviews, for the teachers' views of the functioning of the seminar and their participation in it. In some cases they contrasted it with meetings in their schools.

[What interested me about the seminar was] that it would have a focus. We could work on a specific area, and there would be support for that. . . . Also, as a support for teachers. With colleagues, it fizzles out; you can talk about curriculum, but not about what's important to me. We tried to have a

seminar (in our system). . . . But there's (a) concern--we all came from the same system. (He) warned us about that--competition, etc. I'm not sure [it was the competition]. . . . It's hard to analyze.

Our (administrator) attended (an institute) and wanted two schools to be in a pilot project. (My) school was one of them. It was a requirement for the primary teachers. I was excited. But then there was so much discussion. "Why do we have to?" "Discussing children is an invasion of their privacy." I think it was mostly that people were feeling forced to do it, and they were opposed to this way of thinking. I liked having the principals there. But the principals became competitive. I couldn't believe the horror show. The whole thing fell apart. As a group, we see it as valuable, but when we sit down as adults, we can't talk about it. So the two things fizzled out in (my system). If there was a strong leader in (the system) maybe it would work. (Interview)

(In the alternative school) we worked together on everything. We met a lot, I lived with one other of the teachers and we talked about everything that came up. Also with the Board. So we all worked and shared. Some parents did too. It worked for a small school. Though I felt again I should be experienced and wonderful, since the other two teachers were.

(There was) not much talking (in the suburban system I taught in previously). The teachers were pretty insular. I felt I was on show. I felt I couldn't admit that things were not going well. I couldn't talk to people who could have helped. One other teacher I could have talked with was rarely there. I felt the (subject supervisor) evaluating me--(the principal) too, somewhat.

We did have (one) seminar. Some were very interesting discussions. We sat around and talked about teaching. It was advertised throughout the school and (the principal) was behind it. It was totally volunteer--two hours every two or three weeks, December through May. Sometimes it was at an inconvenient time. Sometimes it was a little lecture-like. There was not a big sense of commitment--there were always two or three people not there. We were not sure we were expected to be committed. It dwindled from 12 or 13 to 7 or 8. (In my current system there is) lots (of support). There's the other teachers. I've known (one of the resource teachers) a long time; she's interested in coming in, or just talking. The other teachers are wonderful. They offer emotional or material and other support. We have great meetings; faculty (gatherings). There's a real effort on the part of the school to keep teachers in touch with one another. Friday afternoon meetings for new teachers. But I need that time in my class, so I don't always go. I could use weekend hours in my class, but it's locked.

Yes, [I'm free to say I'm having trouble] because they believe in me already. They assume/trust that I could teach; and they wanted my style. (Interview)

I don't think [a group like this would work within my school] because we tried. Of course, all the primary teachers were required to come, that's one thing. But it failed pretty miserably. I'm not sure why. (People) say it's hard in the context of your immediate colleagues. I'm not sure why. (Interview)

[The group made me feel comfortable because] I knew they were not part of my school. They were completely different. I felt freer and more comfortable. Also, they were highly motivated teachers. They love their work, trying to improve things. It made me comfortable. I could be as wild as I wanted. My ideas could be as wild as I wanted and they wouldn't laugh. I would be accepted. (Interview)

Yes, I [think such a project could work in one school]. It would have to be voluntary. It's a hard time now but it would be more important now than ever. It would be a problem in some buildings. (Interview)

Intellectually, yes, [I think a group like this could function within my school]. I think it would be great in one's school. A human relations workshop. In reality, I don't think they would do it. When I come here there's a certain anonymity. It gives me more strength, more openness. It doesn't jeopardize my role in the school, how they perceive me and how I perceive them. The ideal would be to have it in a school. It would improve things. It would have immediate practical results for the students. Ideally that would be the cluster meeting. Those groups exist but they are not talking about research, there is nothing systematic, there's no collection of data and observations. The teachers might feel afraid but it depends on how you put it. If it sounds like research then maybe they would do it. It might be fewer people. Even two, three, or four in one school would be okay. (Interview)

We now think that seminars such as the one which served as the basis for this project could be effectively conducted in those schools or school systems in which an environment has been established in which risks can be taken, doubt expressed, and strengths acknowledged. It is clear, however, that such environments do not currently exist in most schools and that developing those environments takes substantial time and a high level of skill and commitment on the part of the administration. Further, most teachers have not experienced settings in which risks can be safely taken and, hence, do not fully recognize the value to be gained from frank presentation of their work. Their attitudes become, therefore, one of the factors which make it difficult to establish such a setting within a school.

We strongly recommend long-term seminars which provide teachers with peer support for reflecting on their work--whether based on this structure or on others. Seminars should be provided within schools or school systems when that can be done effectively. When that is not possible, they should be provided outside the school setting, both because they are needed and because they may contribute to efforts to make changes within schools.

FINISHING

During the final phase of the project participants were encouraged to bring closure to their investigations. Not many were comfortable with this task. Even those who had completed the plans they had made for themselves felt their investigations had not been entirely satisfactory--they would choose to proceed differently given another opportunity--and still felt there was much they did not understand about the issues they had investigated and the methods they had used for doing so. As one participant explained in early March:

> *I'd like to brainstorm about other ways (to collect data). Maybe videotape, maybe ways of keeping observations of what children do. We've come through a process, but we haven't yet figured out how we can collect data and make meaning of it. We've done a first part. Maybe that's all I could expect--the idea that a teacher could be a researcher. But seeing through to the end, I'm not sure we'll get to do that. Maybe it's for a second year.* (Interview)

In order to help people recognize what had been accomplished and define achievable completions for their projects, we set aside one meeting in early April for short reports from all participants. We asked them to respond to:

- *What have you done since we last heard from you?*
- *What do you expect to complete by the end of the year?*
- *What is your next step?* (Agenda Notes)

Even though some participants expressed their disappointment that they had accomplished less than they had anticipated, they continued their commitment to the seminar and to their projects. They not only continued to attend through the busy period at the end of the school year, but also suggested and attended two extra sessions. Since the April vacation began at the end of school on a Thursday, our regular meeting day, we had not originally scheduled a meeting for that week. When participants were reminded the preceeding week that we would not meet for two weeks, they asked, "Why not?" and suggested we change the schedule. We were pleased by their interest, and agreed. We had assumed the last scheduled meeting of the year would be a party instead of a regular session. Again, the participants decided to have the seminar and planned the party for the following week.

They also continued with interviews, observations, and analysis of questionnaires and test results. Some participants chose to begin writing up their results. Because we felt it was important to support those efforts, we distributed copies of their work to all participants, scheduled time in the seminar to provide feedback, and offered to help edit drafts. Since it was clear that it was difficult for people to devote much time to writing and rewriting in May and June, we also offered to organize a three-day writing workshop in July if people were interested. The response of the group to the idea was very positive, though some knew they would be unable to attend, and the workshop was arranged. Due to circumstances, only five of the eleven remaining members were able to attend: three were out of town, one was employed, one was ill, and one experienced a personal tragedy.

The workshop provided an extended, uninterrupted time for those who attended to write reports and give each other continued editorial help. We selected as a site a suburban school with a large comfortable meeting space, easy access to a photocopying center, spaces for writing away from the noise of the typewriters which some people chose to use, and a teachers' room with a coffeepot, stove, and refrigerator. We arranged to have the full-time assistance of the project secretary on-site. Since we had started our work for this report, we participated in the three days both as leaders and as writers.

The initial activities of the workshop were designed to help the participants reflect on their prior writing experiences and the conditions under which they could be assisted to write better. The staff then set out to provide the conditions which participants had identified as most likely to be supportive.

We ask participants to write in response to:

-- *What gets in the way of your writing?*

-- *What (makes) (would make) it possible for you to write more easily, with more satisfaction, or to do a better job of it?* (Workshop Plan)

We found there were a number of reasons participants had difficulty writing:

> *What gets in the way of my writing?*
>
> *I don't know. Maybe I think I should have something interesting to say + I don't. That doesn't seem right 'cause I don't have that feeling of inadequacy about talking + I think I have intelligent or useful things to say. (My hand is starting to get a cramp.)*
>
> *Maybe I don't see the point of it. When I talk it is to someone. Who am I writing for? (Back to the last discussion.)*

If it's for me it doesn't seem worth the trouble (except curriculum planning). I can just think about it + I know what I'm thinking. If it's for others it seems more effective to talk--you get immediate feedback. Maybe part of my problem is not enough feedback. Even when I want to write a letter to a friend I end up putting it off for months and then calling--much more satisfying + immediate feedback. I guess I have to find a use for writing that makes it the best medium. Maybe that would get me over this.

The only one I can think of is an article for publication. I don't know if I have thoughts worthy of that. The only thing I've ever contemplated doing that with is some science curriculum I developed. Interesting--it gets me back to curriculum planning, the only thing I said at the beginning was writing I did primarily for me!

I should get back to--what needs to be written down (as opposed to talked or just thought). Maybe brainstorming ideas for this would help me get an idea of something I wanted to write down. I'd like to try it if the opportunity arises in this workshop. (Participant's Response)

What gets in the way of my writing is that I think I should write very smooth prose with lots of big words and long complex sentences. Also if I'm not in a "neat" mood I can't write. If I look back and the writing is messy, I feel like starting over. This starting over is a delaying tactic I know. But I'm very adept at wasting time this way. Another delaying tactic I have is if I sit down to write at my desk, I decide I can't start until my desk is neat so I start cleaning my desk. Once I decided I couldn't start a paper until I had bought a new ski jacket. Sometimes I can't start if my hair is dirty.

Another thing that happens is that once I overcome the previously described hurdles and do write a couple of paragraphs, I feel so accomplished that I want to stop for the day. If I do stop at that point I have to go through my starting hurdles all over again.

Writing is even worse than reading. Reading requires just the eyes & the brain and all the other senses, that are usually assaulted with bright colors, & loud sounds, & tantalizing smells, are left unbusy. In writing there isn't even anything to read with the eyes (an unnatural state for them) until you've written it. (Participant's Response)

The largest difficulty I have in writing and/or drawing is the personal perception that it is complex and requires a great deal of time/thought/revision to do a proper, even an "elegant" job, which is the very least I can persuade myself to be satisfied with. I can dawdle for days and weeks assembling pieces, honing and connecting discrete thoughts, and building a substructure before anything gets committed to

paper. This works in two ways. Has two different kinds of results. One is that I am generally pleased with what I do, but at the same time I am generally dissatisfied that so little really gets done. Part of it, yes, is desire for perfection, but I can and do turn this to the service of being afraid to commit myself to the process and to undertake the work, take the psychological risks to work out an idea. Learning to write more easily for me means being willing to work in shorter periods of time, to be satisfied with abbreviated or fragmented work, to become more willing to accept the idea that, for now, the process of writing/drawing/thinking is as acceptable and fruitful as the ultimate polished piece and is a significant part of the whole or can even have an individual integrity. (Participant's Response)

--Not just starting
--Thinking I don't have anything important to say
--Not being able to know what I want to say before I start--
"mind is blank" syndrome
--Wanting not to muck up the paper
--Being too neat & tidy
--Wanting someone else to read it, talk with about it--
to clarify and help me get "the right words"
--Typing final drafts is a real problem. I hate it--
paying for it is too expensive.

An aside--Why can't teachers use school's secretary too?-- (Participant's Response)

I enjoy writing. I don't know why I don't make it a higher priority more of the time. Fifteen minutes of sacred writing time each day, or every other day, or something.

But then I get afraid I won't be able to say all I want to say in a short enough time--so I just go on to something else, and let it slide by.

I know I worry about what I write not coming out good enough the first time. (Participant's Response)

Given the structure for writing and feedback from other participants, however, the teachers did write, and are continuing to do so in mid-August. (See Appendix C.) It seems to us that there are several issues which make it difficult for teachers to write: the procrastination and confusions which many writers experience, the lack of confidence that they have anything important to say, and the difficulty of finding extended periods of time. We discussed journal writing at our last seminar session as part of the end of the year evaluation. (See Appendix D for the complete set of questions which were distributed one week in advance.) We asked:

-- *What do you think about the journals and the responses to the journals? If you wish you had written more, do you think it would have been helpful if we had exerted more pressure on you to write? What kinds of pressure? Are there other things which would have been helpful?* (Questions distributed to participants)

Those who responded to this question said that the personal comments to journals were very important. Some people wish they had written more. Some people expressed a desire to have been pushed more but said that there was probably no way of pushing that would have worked! Maybe getting a sub to have a day off to write is an answer! It might also have helped to have some group time to talk about the writing people were doing--maybe to do some practice writing exercises throughout the sessions, not just all at once as we are getting ready to do. (C.) observed that meeting individually with Claryce and Peggy to talk about what would force her to write had been very helpful. (Meeting Notes)

We agree with the participants' suggestion that we should have provided structured writing activities earlier in the year and think that, perhaps, we should have scheduled short writing periods at the beginning of writing sessions.

THE TEACHERS' PROJECTS AND WHAT THEY LEARNED FROM THE EXPERIENCE

What the participants gained from this experience cannot be summed up by what they learned or accomplished with their projects. Nor is it possible to separate what they gained from their projects from what they gained from the experience as a whole--projects, seminars, journals, interviews, and individual consulting sessions.

One way of stating our purpose is that we wanted the teachers to find out about what is important to them. There is a play on words here which is intentional. We wanted them to become clearer about what it is they try to do and what it is that matters to them and we also wanted them to become more informed about those concerns. Our intention was that the combination of identifying their more fundamental or more pressing issues and gathering information about them would lead teachers to deal more responsively in their teaching with the issues which they cared about.

Our further intention was that, as they took charge of their own issues, choosing them and being able to do something about them, they would take themselves more seriously as professionals. And that, as they learned how to find out about what is important to them, they would seek continuing opportunities to reflect on their work and concerns.

In talking about the effects of this project on the teachers, then, we shall consider the five elements described above. We express them here as questions:

- To what extent did this enterprise further reflection which helped to clarify and focus the teachers' thoughts about teaching issues which mattered to them?
- To what extent did the teachers become more knowledgeable about their concerns?
- To what extent did their participation in this project affect their teaching?
- To what extent did they take themselves more seriously as professionals?
- To what extent did it provide them with ways of continuing to be reflective professionals?

It will in many cases, however, not be possible to talk of each in turn. They were constantly intertwined. Thinking differently and seeing differently were often inseparable; proposing ideas to a group for clarification could not be set apart from taking oneself seriously enough to do so; trying out a hunch that you think will "work" in a given situation is hard to separate from deciding how you will determine whether it did.

When participants were asked to describe for some potential newcomer what this project had been about, for the most part they gave descriptions in which these elements were intertwined--they spoke of having a chance to discuss something that you care about, to which you give due thought, that the group helped you think about and clarify as well as learn more about:

> *A group of people who come together and each person is to describe something in their classroom that's of interest and they want to pursue. . . .It's a group committed to teaching and to improving teaching. It's a dynamic, interesting, stimulating group in which you can develop your ideas as well as learning the ideas of other people.* (Interview)

> *A time for teachers to get together to explore things that are really important to what they're doing. Without getting side-tracked by curriculum or schedules. To focus on what's really important to you as a teacher--without distraction.* (Interview)

> *It was a group which had been started to encourage teachers to research areas of concern and interest to them. To give them guidance, to keep them on the topic, to clarify issues on the topic, to share issues of concern with each other. . . . It gave me a kick in the pants to do something I was interested in doing, and I could not have done without that structure.* (Interview)

> *You focus on what your questions are, what you want to answer and what you can do with the information once you have it.* (Interview)

> *Teachers from different places getting together to talk about education, other than just teaching math and so on. There is an inherent value in spending time talking about important things in education. . . .I'd describe different people's projects this year. . . .I'd be talking about keeping a journal and its benefits. . . .It's enough of a different kind of environment so even if you arrive bedraggled with no energy, after a few minutes you get livened up--and it's a livening up that is work-related.* (Interview)

THE TEACHERS' PROJECTS

The following accounts summarize each teacher's project and indicate some of the ways the teachers gained from them. Later sections will deal with other elements less directly related to a teacher's own project.

• N.Go., a fourth-grade teacher who had herself "worked hard not to dislike math," thought it was important to work on that same issue with children. She hoped to pursue her recent introduction to computers because "kids are technologically deprived," and, on a different dimension, because "I do like pilot projects, you've got to understand." She wanted to do "something with math or science that would work into computer technology--simple experiments to see what little kids can understand." Since this project could supply observers, which was of interest to the computer firm, she was able to use, at no cost, two computers with attached temperature-measuring devices, which graphed temperature against time. Her expectation that students would find use of the computers interesting, challenging, and rewarding was confirmed. She noted that in watching her students use the computer she identified strengths in some students which she had not detected in her regular lessons and that after the computers were no longer available she still felt she was seeing more in students than she had before using the computers. She also noted that, "You read Piaget but you don't really believe how different the kids think from you." She was pleased that the observers did not detect any differences in use related to sex.

• P.S., an experienced kindergarten teacher in an urban school carried out two investigations. Her first question centered on her concern for bilingual students in her classroom. She wanted to understand the extent to which they understood her oral instructions, in particular her use of words which had no visible referent in the room. By administrative decision, the students who were not native English speakers were removed from her room in late fall and placed in a separate class. After reading the observations made by a consultant supplied by the project, she concluded that the understanding of English of the students who remained in her room was sufficient for them to participate in group instruction and to follow directions.

Her second investigation centered on a student in her class about whom she had a number of concerns and worries. The student was shy in the presence of the teacher, hesitated to answer questions, did not volunteer unless called upon, and had, on at least one occasion, been teased by other children on the playground or the bus to the the point that she did not want to come to school. The teacher again invited the observer to her room, had videotapes made of the child, kept an anecdotal record, and tried

to answer the question, "What are the pressures that are influencing this child's behavior?"

The highlight of this study came at the end of the year when, using funds available through this seminar, she was able to hire a substitute for her class so that she could have parent conferences. The mother of this child was one parent who came for a conference, which was very productive.

She later said, in part:

> *E's mother stayed in the classroom for the whole morning and talked freely with the substitute [while P.S. continued with other parent conferences]. Clearly she enjoyed having the opportunity to be there. She also told P.S. that G. was not shy at home and, in reviewing the entire situation with the observer, P.S. concluded that she no longer thought of G. as "shy."* (Meeting Notes)

P.S. was struck by the value of maintaining contact with parents, even in a system where busing makes that enormously difficult.

She also felt that the observing and note-taking that she started to do helped her to stay more in touch with the day-to-day happenings in her classroom.

● C.K., a second-grade teacher with a long-term interest in developmental issues, particularly moral development, took this year to look more closely at whether her students could take the perspective of others. Her interest in this question was related to her desire to know whether the standards and expectations she has for students are reasonable and fair. She had previously read literature in the area and this year continued her reading, concentrating primarily on the work of Robert Selman. Much of the research she had read was based on interviews about hypothetical situations. That research was interesting and informative as background, but did not answer the question she posed for herself. She wanted to understand students' behavior and capabilities in "natural" settings, in situations which normally arise in school or on the playground.

For example, it was clear to her that between September and June her students became better listeners in class meetings. She hoped to better understand the reasons for that change: because they were interested in what other people said? because they knew they were not allowed to interrupt? because they wanted a chance to talk and they understood that other people do too? For the first phase of her investigation, she arranged to have students interviewed individually to determine their views of class meetings. Later, she invited another teacher in the seminar to observe in her classroom, including a class meeting.

In each of these cases, she gained useful information but still felt her question had not been answered to her satisfaction. She finally decided that the best way for her to investigate this issue was to keep

regular anecdotal records in her classroom. In her final report she wrote:

> *What ended up seeming most useful is the data I collected by observing children at various times of the day and making notes on this. The most useful times were choice times, but things came up during the day. . . .Since I was there all the time, I could be most effective.*

In an individual conference with project staff, she said that she concluded from her study that her expectations were indeed reasonable, and that she now felt more confident about what she did. She also referred to her increased appreciation of observing and record-keeping. She later wrote in her final report:

> *I also came to realize that my observing and recording was beneficial for other reasons--picking up patterns more quickly, remembering incidents I wanted to recall (weeks and months) later in more detail than I do from memory for use in parent conferences or consultations with colleagues.* (See Appendix C.)

In her final interview, she added: "I learned the value of doing observation. I knew all the time it was important, of course, but I more concretely learned its value."

• J.W., an experienced third-grade teacher in a suburban school, who had a very enjoyable preceding year found herself this fall bewildered by the lack of cooperation among the students in her room. She began the seminar wanting to know, "how one could establish a climate for students which would enable them to learn from each other, help each other and value each other." She identified five or six students who appeared to be the primary sources of conflict within the room. She began to document their behavior by keeping a journal, having an observer in the room on several occasions, and observing her own class for a day as it was taught by a substitute. From the documentation and her own increasing awareness of the children, it became clear that though there were a number of children who created disturbances in the room, one child contributed more to the unpleasant atmosphere than any of the others. The teacher found not only that the child created difficulties for herself, the other children, and the teacher, but also that it seemed impossible to reach agreement with her mother on the best strategy for dealing with the situation.

Though the seminar provided the teacher with the possibility of clarifying her thinking and gaining support for the efforts she was making, the situation in the classroom did not improve. Then, in late winter, with no consultation and little warning, the child was removed from her classroom and placed in another classroom at the request of the mother.

J.W. found that from the time R. left, "the classroom was a different place. It wasn't perfect, but at the last part of the year it was a quite different place." She didn't really have to work at finding ways to help the group become cooperative and friendly--"It just happened," with the

help of her tried and true approaches from other years--"group meetings, discussion of problem situations."

When asked what she had learned, she said:

> *That one bad apple can spoil the barrel--is that what you mean? It is, that is what I learned--some situations are not correctable without psychiatric help. The best group dynamics are not enough, the best help of the teacher, and even with the very best support group like this one was for me, isn't enough. That's not a very positive learning. But maybe it could help some people in similar situations to say, 'this is just a year I'm going to have to get through.' [With hindsight is there anything you'd have done differently about your project?] Yes, I think I'd have abandoned the whole thing and examined some other facets of life in the classroom--children's thinking, for example, that's what I'm going to do next year. I'd have said, frig the behavior, let's look at how they think. R. herself, she was very alert, it was fascinating how she thought things through. I could have tried to find a way to have her explaining to me how she was thinking things through. That's what I would have done.* (Interview)

- R.M., a kindergarten teacher with a terminally-ill child in her classroom, documented the questions and confusions which she faced, the way she resolved them, her feelings and reactions at different points during the year, the literature which she found useful, and the sources of support within her own school.

One of her major efforts was to reach out to other people, to involve them in helping each other come to terms with the student's anticipated death. Learning to reach out to people, to establish mutual help, had important effects on her. She spoke of it in these ways:

> *I also got some (articles about dying children) from other teachers at the school. The seminar was a model, and then it started happening at school. . . .People started handing me things. . . .This is the first time in school people are sharing things, like in the seminar. [Do you think it's a coincidence?] I think it's a matter of my reaching out. It's not just around (the child). The art teacher, too, responded with giving me an article on another topic she thought I'd be interested in.* (Interview)

That was in March. In July, she described the main continuing influence of the seminar as:

> *Realizing that you are a resource and you work with a lot of people who are resources, and attempting to use these resources. Asking important questions of people, and hoping they would ask questions back. That was something I've learned that I don't think I'll lose.* (Interview)

And later in that same interview, invited to say anything else on her mind, she came back to the same point:

> *I felt as a group of professional people this is really what we should be doing for each other, that very rarely happens, for some reason in our school. And I wonder why, and I wonder how I can make it more of a reality in my own school. And I guess what I would do is, as I mentioned, I would probably try to help people by asking questions, if they come to me with a concern, or I might try to find something they could read about it, you know, in the same way the seminar did, rather than giving pat, quick answers.*

She also came to realize that, as a teacher, being concerned about a dying child was not different in kind from being concerned about other children for other reasons. You still thought out your options, what the child needed, what you could do about it, and provided as best you could.

- M.E., a junior high school art teacher in an urban school, who has been a teacher-facilitator for implementing Glasser's approach to discipline said:

> *All my questions (about relations among students) weren't answered through taking that course and being a facilitator. Much of the philosophy he teaches us, certain approaches you're supposed to go through, in discipline, in relations with other people, and in feelings--I haven't seen that much of a change. So maybe in this seminar, I could find some of the answers myself--so the students' attitudes could change, about themselves and about each other, and their families.* (Interview)

She worked with other teachers in her school who are part of the "Glasser group" to identify areas for investigation, which included appearance of the building, effectiveness of the teaching staff and administration, usefulness of course offerings, after-school activities, and food service. She then presented a draft questionnaire to the seminar for suggestions for revision, and, having revised it, sought approval from the administrators in her building, and administered it to students in grades six, seven, and eight and their parents.

She would have liked to have been ready with the questionnaire early in the year in order to have had time during the year to work on the students' issues, and then to have administered it again in the spring, to see whether the students' views of the issues were changed as a result. Nonetheless, she was pleased with what she learned. "The students were enthusiastic in responding to these questionnaires," she wrote in her final report. "Observing the students while they were answering these questions I felt that they were finally saying, 'It's about time I can tell you how I feel about school.'"

Two questions in particular interested her. She was, as she said, "shocked" to learn that the eighth-grade students felt that what they were learning in school would have no value to them in the future. She was intrigued that in all the classes the students' opinions of the other

students in the school was "OK." She did not feel she understood these responses, and would like to continue the study by pursuing them further:

> *I would have more questions on values. How they value this and how they value that. I mentioned the question about whether their education would serve them well in the future. Well, I would ask about what they are doing now and what they would want to value tomorrow. I don't know exactly what questions. I asked them how they liked the other students in the building; except for two or three of them, they said, "OK." From that I would like to ask why did they think they were OK, they should have thought they were super. Then maybe I would ask how they felt about themselves. Was "OK" a cop-out because they had a lot of feelings, because in the building there are lots of fights? Maybe they don't value friends as much in the middle school as in the high school. . . .I wouldn't mind doing more research that entailed the students and myself and getting to know what's ticking in their minds.* (Interview)

• P.C., a thoughtful suburban art teacher, who described herself as a turtle in one interview, said at the outset that she did not yet have a specific question. She hoped the seminar would "help me explore questions about kids' art work, how it changes, what's important; help me identify clearly a number of specific things I'd like to think about."

As it turned out, she chose to think about young children's observational drawings. She entered several pages of questions on this topic in her journal:

> *What do they "observe" at this age? Comparison of writing/drawing. What are things observed in each? Do they vary from child to child? Is there a consistency across writing/drawing or does one predominate? Are there underlying structural similarities in writing/drawing development, or do they advance at different rates? Is there an age below which observational drawing is <u>not</u> appropriate? If so, why? Is this attitude supported by concrete evidence? Social custom? Results of a particular type of teaching?* (Journal)

After further clarifying her own questions and their interrelationships she settled on the following enterprise:

> *All this leads me to believe that the proper place to begin is not with the kids and the drawings, since I've done it and know it works and is valuable, but with an investigation of peoples' attitudes toward observational drawing. Both art teachers and classroom teachers. To find out what their attitudes/opinions/experience with it are, whether they have any understanding, theoretical or pragmatic, of how they came to have those attitudes, and <u>then</u> to work to examine the value of observational drawing with classes of kids, both in the art room and the classroom.* (Journal)

In fact, she knew that art teachers tended not to ask elementary school children to do observational drawing. Since she did, and was pleased with the results, she wanted to know whether there was a good reason for other art teachers not to do so. Her interviews confirmed her own practice, since she found no "understanding, theoretic or pragmatic" to justify not doing it. She also found quite striking differences between art teachers and classroom teachers, in their views of observational drawing, and became intrigued with the source of people's assumptions.

• D.T., a junior high school art teacher, after giving some thought to two other projects, decided to study the importance to her students of the motivation she gave them. She did a comparative study in which she gave the same assignment in three different classes and varied the degree to which she took part with them in deciding how to go about the assignment.

> *In one form I would give them no motivation. I would just sit at my desk and say 'do this.' In another form I would give them verbal or visual motivation with minimal circulation myself. And then in a third form I would give them a long demonstration and then we would have a discussion and I would circulate and sit with them to discuss things.* (Interview)

She said of the experience:

> *It's probably something I never would have done. . . .I learned how lazy I had become. Plus little things. I never really listened to them talk. I'm a good teacher but I learned I'm not as good as I could be. [If you had another year as a teacher, how would you go on from that study?] I'd do it at another grade level. I'd forget the pressures to produce. I'd get involved in the learning process.* (Interview)

• M.R., an experienced and dedicated second-grade teacher in an urban setting who has faced many frustrations with the implementation of Chapter 766 and PL94-142, worked on preparing a handbook for teachers which would outline their rights under the law and provide guidance for ways they might obtain needed services for students. She refers to trying to

> *subvert the system, because of the frequent cancellation of services to children. Our new 766 person in the school, she cancelled classes when she said she had too much paperwork to do. I kept a record and out of 33 days she cancelled 13. I told the principal and he said, 'That's not your business.' I said, 'You're impacting on my teaching load.'. . . It's a frightening record. I'm held responsible as the classroom teacher. The kids come back with the same three papers every day: the numbers from 1 to 10, their name, and a drawing. The 766 teacher before this one was super. The principal says I have no control, no right; but I do have a right to say, 'You have to take my kids.'* (Interview)

Along with many of the other teachers, M.R. credits the seminar with giving her a framework for her work. "It's made me do some thinking and organizing, it's made me do more of what I wanted to do, to know more about 766, though I'm not happy with what I'm getting." (Interview)

She also said she is now more conscious of the special needs students and keeps records of the time that's denied them. In addition, she is much more aware of policies within the system which affect these students.

• F.R., a middle school bilingual teacher, began his project by posing a number of questions which he thought might help him understand why a group of six or eight female students in his class were not working and were often disrupting the rest of the class. In order to better understand the students, he arranged for a female counselor in the school to meet with them for small discussions. He also arranged to have them interviewed by a bilingual woman from a local university. He continued to reflect on his own teaching, his views of schooling, and the contrast between his views and those of some of his colleagues. In late winter, it turned out that the problem he had set out to investigate had disappeared. The students had a much more positive attitude toward the class, were doing their homework, and were being less disruptive.

At first, his interpretation was the following:

> *Things sometimes change, not by technical rearrangement but as a product of your caring. The problem students knew I was concerned, regardless of data, technique, slides, film, what I write on the blackboard, textbook, a change in textbook, it made no difference. I'm trying to think, I'm not clear about the answer. Thursday I realized that they have changed. Something intangible that has been done. The only thing it could be is the caring.* (Interview)

Though he had not been keeping a journal of his experience during the year, he decided he would like to try to reconstruct the history, in order to better understand the success story. He met with a graduate student interviewer three times to establish notes and an outline for his article, which he is now in the process of writing. (See Appendix C.)

He also spoke with far more assurance and detail in the final interview:

> *[What did you learn from your study?] Two things. I might have the same kind of students again. They exist all the time. We don't pay attention to them. They go to special teachers, and the homeroom teacher avoids them. I learned that by paying attention to them, and I thought, the past few years I've neglected some like that. I didn't set any high standards for them, I just neglected them.*
>
> *And then specifically I learned to be personal, to be friends. I learned about helping on a personal level. I learned that you need a midpoint. My first year I was*

very personal; I didn't want anyone to call me Mr. And then I became too disciplined. At the end of the year, last week, I felt very good. . . .

I also learned education is a kind of compromise, a bargaining situation in the classroom in terms of conduct and what needs to be done. I learned I'm not the authority, the last word. At the end I didn't see them as misbehaving or odd or behavior that was interfering with their learning. Instead I was saying, okay I accept that, because I know you are doing work for me. That's what many teachers should realize--they are not the one who commands. It was a kind of exchange. (Interview)

• R.S. and N.R., two reading teachers from the same inner-city middle school, one of whom works with bilingual students, worked together to improve their instructional techniques. They investigated the use of the Cloze procedure as an instructional strategy. They kept careful records of student performance throughout the year and also paid close attention to the reasons children gave for their solutions. The bilingual teacher has also experimented this year by doing more direct reading instruction in English with less oral instruction in English grammar. The teacher of English-speaking students managed, after three years' effort, to secure instructional materials that match the achievement level rather than the age level of her below-average students. Through the use of the Cloze procedure, new instructional materials, and other changes in teaching techniques, these two teachers demonstrated more improvement in achievement scores this year than in any previous years' work with students of similar achievement levels.

For both of them, the most helpful aspect of their study was looking closely at their students. "I look at kids differently," one of them said. "Something happened to me this year." The other said that she felt quite differently about the students in the class she studied, compared with the students in the other classes she taught this year. "I felt they had made more progress, I had more rapport with them because I understood them better from my note-taking. . . .You see patterns, which things frustrate and please that child. It's easy to overlook all that otherwise." (Interview)

• W.T., a first-grade teacher, who was not new to teaching but was new to her district and school, considered the question of independence in her students: How is it that children come to be independent? During the year she spent considerable time rethinking her question and writing journal notes to herself. On several occasions she also had observers in her room, one who was provided by the project and others who were available through the school or other institutions.

As the year went by, this concern became interwoven with another theme, which she referred to as a weakness in her teaching: "I go into things without being totally ready or organized for them"; and "My record-keeping--I haven't found anything total enough and concise enough." This perfectionist theme--wanting to find a total resolution to every complicated aspect of her teaching--was a consistent and difficult one for her

throughout the year. Another way she expressed it was, "I try to do too much"--which she said in both the first and the last interviews.

In the last interview, however, she seems to have a different way of looking at it. Instead of feeling it a weakness to undertake anything that isn't thoroughly perfected, she said, "I would like to do things more simply, more often." And of record-keeping, she said, "I think I've become more aware of the value of record-keeping even in simple terms. If I get something down each day that's better than nothing."

Of her teaching activities she said, "I also think this year I dealt with focusing on bits of the room to work on in simpler terms. . . .I can look at individual centers and see how to improve them and not have to reorganize the whole room."

In fact, this shift in attitude towards taking small focused steps in her classroom related quite directly to her thinking and observations about independence. During the course of the year the focus of her question had shifted, from a concern with definitions and sources of independence, to asking how environments can be structured which will foster independence. It was at this point that, with the help of the project staff, she identified the science center as her highest priority for development in her room, made lists of what needed to be done and acquired, decided which tasks could be delegated to the student teacher, and convinced herself that she need not simultaneously make other changes in the room which she felt were needed. She then set up a more workable science center and part of a math area, where "Kids could work independently; they could go and know what to use."

Through her extensive journal-writing she also identified a wider range of ways in which children could be, and were, independent in her room. In June, she wrote in her journal:

> *This (incident) reinforced my thinking that independence is a multi-faceted concept that is hard to use generally. It needs qualifiers. And that most people (all?) (from what I've observed and talked/listened about) have independent and dependent sides to them in varying degrees.* (Journal)

FIVE QUESTIONS

It is clear in reading these accounts that the first three of our questions (pp.) are inseparable. In most cases, the process of thinking about what their issue really was, of finding out about it, of trying to do something about it, all went hand in hand.

In some cases, one or the other of these elements did play a more predominant role. In addition, as we said at the outset of this section, the participants' projects were not the totality of their experience. In this part, we would like to consider each of the five questions, for the group as a whole.

CLARIFYING AND FOCUSING

A number of remarks which the teachers made show explicitly their appreciation of this aspect. Here, for example, is one journal entry from January:

> *Dear Claryce,*
>
> *Your comments and the note from Peggy Stubbs about your confusions about exactly what I wanted to do were exactly to the point. I have been teasing around several ideas simultaneously and have not been clear myself until last week or so what would be most important for me to do.* (Journal)

Other comments were made in interviews:

> *The organization and the actual research paper helped me put together questions and answers I've had in the back of my mind for years.* (Interview)
>
> *What interested me was not information; but the process the teacher went through to clarify an issue. Are you looking for the right things? . . . the process that you learn in going about investigating something that was important to you--so that it would become clearer to you. To refine it in some way, not absolutely clear, but so that it becomes a little more refined than it was when you started.* (Interview)
>
> *When you talk about what you're doing it's very helpful--somehow it clarifies to yourself what you're doing.* (Interview)

The seminar has made me conscious of thinking at the end of the day what happened today. I do think about it. I'm trying to develop a notetaking habit now. (Interview)

Two remarks go quite beyond this level, to a clarifying and focusing on the person her/himself:

It's . . . actually understanding yourself, too--a kind of introspection. I don't know if you call that research, understanding yourself? (Interview)

I'm just now realizing the seminar has helped me be the kind of person I want to be (laugh)--creative, non-traditional, thinking about what I'm doing, thinking critically. (Interview)

BECOMING MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE

It is very hard to disentangle the second and third questions--learning more about your students or your classroom, and acting differently as a teacher. The following quote makes the point:

It's not the issue, it's the process you go through with the group. You become a better observer. I guess that's what it comes down to. I guess that's critical to being a teacher. [Doesn't it matter what you observe?] (Laughter) . . . I guess I'm working at becoming more refined at what I see. When you go through research that's what happens--you get more refined in what you see with regard to children and what they learn. (Interview)

On the whole, we consider these two questions together to be dealt with in the summaries of each teacher's project, and we will not try to elaborate further. However, there are a few instances in which the teachers certainly learned more, without changing their practice.

C.K. and P.C. both basically believed a certain element of their practice was a good idea, but were not positive; their studies confirmed them in their practice.

M.E. was primarily interested in making her school more responsive to the students' feelings, but, in this first year, did not have the occasion to start such action. For the time being, her study is a source of interest and further questions for her.

R.M., who imagined that she might be called upon to act very differently from usual, found that the ways she usually responded to children still held.

EFFECT ON THEIR TEACHING

Of course in many cases where a teacher feels better about her teaching, it is difficult to say that it was an effect of the participation in this project. Some of the teachers were relatively new to the profession, and were changing from year to year simply with increasing experience. F.R., for example, referred to finding a midpoint this year, compared with two previous years. For whatever reason, he does see himself as a different teacher now:

> *I'll be very different, more relaxed. I feel I know how to deal with all kinds of students. I feel confident that whoever comes, I know how to deal with them. [Any other differences?] Observing students more closely. Next year I will do that. I'm going to keep some kind of record, a log, a journal of daily events, happenings and mishappenings. I would have a better idea of where the kids are. . . .I'll be less strict--I was too well organized.* (Interview)

R.S., when asked if next year would be different, said, "Yes, for one thing I've had another year experience. And then trying to look at something in an organized way." (Interview)

What she said about the differences was similar to F.R. Next year she would repeat the procedure which served as the basis of her research and, "keeping a journal--I would try to, I would like to. I'm more apt to look at things kids are doing and try to figure them out." (Interview)

Other participants had taught longer, and were more clear about the effects of their participation in this seminar.

> *It was exciting to teach in that particular way of looking at what you're doing, looking in depth at one specific thing, tuning in on something that I'm doing. You got caught up in the excitement of looking at what you're doing, rather than just doing it.* (Interview)

This statement from one of the teachers conveys one of the most general themes in the participants' views of how it made a difference to their teaching. Often the same theme is conveyed in conjunction with record-keeping or journal-writing.

> *I had spent my time thinking about specifics--how to teach this or how to handle that. This got me on to different ways that kids approach things. It got me out of teaching and on to . . . focusing on children's thinking. . . .A lot of the benefit for me was more general understanding and appreciation of kids, what's important to them at this age. It helps me be a better teacher.* (Interview)

Several teachers mentioned that the quality of the leaders of these seminars influenced them as teachers. One teacher articulated this quite clearly:

They exemplified for me what I would like to be as a teacher. . . .I learned it was important to listen. Each person has to go through their own process--it's important that they do that for themselves. The leadership was consistent in these ways. . . .They were clear about not judging. Listen, be supportive, clarify what they (the person whose issue it is) wanted to do, not what you wanted to do. This was a learning experience for me. . . .

The leaders said, "Yes, there are things you can do," and offered ways of going about it. . . .They were breaking down stereotypes of what you can and can't do. . . .That was a learning experience for me. That's what a good teacher tries to do. . . .

The other element is having a prepared agenda. . . .There were expectations. But it was flexible. Within these expectations you didn't have to do it this way, or think these particular thoughts. That's what teaching is. . . .

Questions are more important, that's another feature of the leaders. Not getting hung up on, "I solved it this way, why don't you try this," but instead asking important questions about what's important to them. . . .I felt the effect of people asking me questions, so I want to do the same thing as a teacher. [Can you see that working with kids?] Yes. It's fuzzy, but. . . I would think so. I could see it working with kids. As a teacher I would try to ask important questions. (Interview)

In a few cases there was an interesting reversal in the usually assumed relationship: find out something more and therefore act differently. In the reversed situation, it was in order to find out something more that the teachers acted differently as teachers. In order to know the answer to the research question, they had to talk to or look at the students more intimately, and this very interaction was a different kind of teaching. One of the teachers who had set out to do a quantitative study, with pre- and post-tests, said the following:

I'd continue observing the students and taking notes. . . .I did it this year with the one year I did the project with. At the end of the year I could tell the difference. I felt much better about them than about the other classes. I felt they had made more progress. I had more rapport with them, because I understand them better from my note-taking. (Interview)

It seems here that it was not the outcome of the research that made a difference, but the doing of it.

TAKING THEMSELVES SERIOUSLY AS PROFESSIONALS

There is no question that all the participants did come to take themselves more seriously as professionals as a result of this experience. In

one form or another they expressed, usually with some surprise, feelings such as: it's not always someone else who knows better; they know some things which educational "experts" don't know (the details of their own work); what they know could be of interest to someone else; what educational "experts" know--at least, let's say, researching experts--is not necessarily more true or more helpful to anyone than what they know, or can find out.

The following quotes give some range of these feelings:

> *I like the fact that we don't just share anecdotes. We do a little, but Claryce focuses us away from that to more questioning, not, as she says, making suggestions, but asking questions to help each other. That's a whole new dimension for me. It throws the responsibility back on me. You (the teacher) are the resource. You (the other) throw the question back to me. When people ask a good question about what you're concerned about, you usually feel you can answer them. That's when you're using yourself as your own resource. . . .People are asking me, how would you answer that? That implies a certain trust. I realize the answer doesn't lie out there somewhere but it lies within you. That's what I've been made aware of through the seminar.* (Interview)

> *I thought research was reading studies and taking it further. I didn't understand that I could collect the data, I could raise the questions. I know it got said, but I didn't internalize it.* (Interview)

> *None of us thought of ourselves as researchers. That was an exciting discovery--that we knew a lot and could find out a lot. That you can do it, it's not as mystical as it seems.* (Interview)

> *It was wonderful how people could be resources for each other. Even from different areas of concentration. I was overwhelmed by the professionalism. I must say that before I had seen teachers as unbalanced people.* (Interview)

One of the teachers, speaking of a group of teachers in her school system who were being transferred to other jobs in which they had no specific experience, considered that this kind of seminar would be appropriate for them because

> *they all have Master's degrees, they have 20 years of experience; they only have to bring to their own focus what they learned 20 years ago.* (Interview)

> *I know that "I've been influenced by that group. I don't know if I could pinpoint it for you. I felt better about myself. I had had problems . . . and then when this came up, I said, here, I can put it in a structure and give it some time and be professional about this. That's what the group helped me do. It helped me to keep the problem on a professional level.* (Interview)

Your status as a teacher was heightened. You sort of sensed from the people in charge that teaching was a very important function to have as a person. People don't take it seriously enough. I began to respect myself more as a teacher, even though we were being demoralized by 2½ (the Massachusetts tax cap). Our function as a teacher was given some respect. (Interview)

CARRYING ON AS REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS

There are a number of facets to this--keeping up their observing, note-taking, seeking out colleagues as mentioned often above. In addition, however, is the evolution of their notions of research and their relationship to it.

Many of the teachers said they had changed their views about the nature of research. Many of them believed research was a matter of statistics, numbers, standardized instruments. It was done by somebody else, and for somebody else. And very often, its purpose was not to find out something, but to prove something that you knew already to be the case.

In her second interview, one teacher described a change in her view of research, since the project's start:

I went into this program with ideas about standardization, control groups, statistics, charts. This free style of research is new to me. . . . [Had you been aware of nontraditional kinds of research before?] No. Well. I wouldn't have called it research. I'd have called it a teaching tip, or anecdotes. Research meant data, proving something. It was the student mentality: read articles, critique the method, come to your own conclusion. [And now?] I wouldn't call it research, but I'd call it useful. Everything is useful, but research is science--very objective, with numbers. [And is it useful also?] Yes, but it has more weight in the academic world. . . . Both are research, but when you're trying to come up with things that support what you do, you look for numbers. . . . I guess it depends on your goal. (Interview)

Later in the same interview, she came back to her own study, and referred to it as "boring," because "the kids are obviously going to do better. . . . " After coming up with some ideas of what she then considered more interesting questions, she asked, "How come everybody writes articles about the obvious?"

She was quite clearly grappling with new notions about research, in this interview, and acknowledging her perplexity. Three months later, she seemed to have come to some resolution both about whether research can find out anything new, and about what forms it might take to do so.

[The last time we talked, you talked about research that only finds out what you know already.] Yes, if it's so obvious, why do it? Initially, I had thought it was cut-and-dried. Then I saw this other type of research and it seemed to be valid, more qualitative, more subjective. It's nontraditional. What

makes a good teacher, that's hard to put into words. This (more subjective) research is a way of quantifying it, but not with tests. There's a pattern that you think is there and you try to find it. [Could you find out new things this way?] Sure, but you might not be able to prove it. You always do need a goal. You need some idea of what you are looking for to begin with. So it wouldn't be necessarily brand new. [Do you think this seminar channeled people into one kind of research?] Yes. [Was that very limiting?] No. It broadened my mind. I was looking at the students all year figuring out what they did and how they did it. (Interview)

She was not alone. There were others who were also shifting their thoughts about the nature of research and its role in their own practice.

Before I came, I thought that research was in books. There was sampling, tests, and reevaluating theories. Now I think research is much greater than that. It's based on observations and recording observations and coming up with new insight. It's more than having theories and testing them and reevaluating them. (Interview)

My old view was statistical, control groups, stuff you can measure. In this view every teacher is a researcher, really. All this stuff in her head, a vast amount of data. . . .There's this rich source of material on every single kid plus all the stuff in my head. (Interview)

There's a possible approach I could take around questions that I have. There's a method I can follow. I can try to ask more questions about my question. I can seek out materials, do observations, come up with data. Before, I wasn't sure how I could go about it. (Interview)

If you ask a question, and then make some observations, and then draw some conclusions based on your observations and then ask some more questions and make some more observations--I guess that's what research is. Whereas before, I thought I'd have to know statistics and make an X^2. Interview)

This teacher went on later to say

if the teacher is doing all these things in research, then she's a researcher. [And is she?] In general, I don't think so. . . .Teachers could be researchers, but they aren't. . . .The so-called teaching is a group of kids progressing at an accepted rate. The other children are doing the opposite and being ignored because there is some success with these other children. When you add research you're apt to notice all the children in your classroom, rather than those with whom you have an immediate rapport. (Interview)

One participant, who had a Master's degree in psychology and was the least fearful of traditional research, evolved his notions of research and gave some interesting thought to the abilities needed for the kind of research done in this seminar.

> *. . . Control groups are unfeasible in our schools. They're not possible. Maybe you could find two students but you can't shuffle around the students; everything is already set in front of you. Rats are so much easier.*
>
> *I would try to follow intuition more often. I would pay attention to the human, personal side, not so much in terms of numbers. That's one of my biggest changes. Before, I was put off by anecdotal anything. If it wasn't tables, I didn't think it was worth it. But now I know there's a great deal of truth in one interview, in one conversation.*
>
> *(For qualitative research it would be good to have training) not in math and statistics, but in interviewing, observing, writing, how to keep a good record, how to tell what happened. You saw something--how do you write it down? What do you pay attention to? Next year it would be good to focus on the best ways to observe and record social and behavioral events. You could do observation exercises, how to observe something, how to recount the event afterwards. Step by step, or your interpretation, or a chronological line of how it unfolds, what comes before and after the event. You need this for the kind of subjective thing we are doing. . . .*
>
> *It has to be in terms of concepts instead of math and statistics. So you have this idea. Polish the idea. That kind of exercise would be great.*
>
> *You'd say, next week everyone has to write about it, not only the teacher who brought the idea. Talk to people, go to the library, it would multiply the original teacher's efforts ten or fifteenfold. So you wouldn't emphasize statistics but you'd emphasize concepts and logic. Does that follow from that logic? I think teachers would like these kinds of things rather than statistics and control groups.* (Interview)

OUR STUDY OF THE PROJECT

PARTICIPANTS AS SUBJECTS

One of the inherent dangers of any research is that human beings may be perceived and treated as objects. We have tried to avoid this approach in our work. In the first session of the seminar, the director presented the project as:

- *a staff development project, in which people will be encouraged to think more clearly about their work and hence generate new ideas about learning and teaching,*

- *documentation of the project in which the staff will try to understand how things are proceeding and why.*

We, along with the other participants, will help each person figure out what s/he wants to know, why, and what seems the most feasible way to find out.

We ask that you help us document and analyze our work so we can:

- *do it as well as possible--give the idea a fair trial,*

- *reflect on our process for ourselves and other people who might want to try it,*

- *provide information to researchers.* (Agenda Notes)

She went on to explain our methods of data collection, including those such as interviews and journals which would require their active participation.

She made it clear that we would grant them anonymity if they so chose, but that anonymity would not be the most important guiding principle. In our view, it may not always be desirable: a teacher might want to be known as having made certain contributions to the seminar; quite possibly teachers might want to publish their own articles about their participation and their projects. For another thing, anonymity of the person does not guarantee respect for the person. What we were most concerned about was respect, and our major guiding principle was adopted from John Elliott: people have the right to control the data about themselves.[9]

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[9]John Elliott, Developing Hypotheses about Classrooms from Teachers' Practical Constructs (Grand Forks: University of North Dakota Press, 1976.)

In keeping with our view, we:

- ensured that participants were kept informed, at all times,
- gave each participant a copy of the summary of the proposal and the questions we listed in the proposal as those we intended to answer, (See Appendix E.)
- made available one copy of the proposal for interested participants to read,
- gave participants access to our records and reports,[10]
- gave participants the right to check and verify the interviewer's record of each interview,
- gave each participant a copy of the American Anthropological Association, Principles of Professional Responsibility.[11]
- sent each participant a copy of the description of their project which appears in this report and a letter explaining that we would use excerpts from their journals and interviews and telling them where the report would be available. (See Appendix F.)

There are indications that the participants appreciated the openness and respect which they were offered. The absence of any mention of the problem is an indicator of the extent of the level of trust developed. When Davis proposed to the group that she have the right to use material from this project for either her dissertation or her qualifying paper, there was immediate agreement and no fear expressed of exploitation or misrepresentation. In fact, one teacher asked "If we were to be worried about you writing about us, what should we be worried about?" Another indication is the degree to which the teachers accorded smimlar respect to people involved in their own research projects.

In addition to striving to avoid treating the subjects of our investigation as objects, we have also tried to avoid distancing

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[10] There were two exceptions to this policy. Except in a few instances and with prior agreement, we did not make journal entries and responses or interview notes from one participant available to others. When Davis negotiated entry to this site she was operating under the rules of the HGSE Committee on Human Subjects, which require absolute confidentiality and anonymity. Her field notes, therefore, remained her property.

[11] The American Anthropological Association, Principles of Professional Responsibility, Newsletter, Vol. 11, No. 9 (American Anthropological Association, 1970).

ourselves either from the meaning of our work or from the reader. We have, therefore, included many of our biases, assumptions, and dilemmas in this report.

DOCUMENTATION

Because this was a research project, it was well documented.[12] As it turned out, the documentation served many purposes. It formed a permanent record for the purposes of this report and any further articles derived from the project; it provided the staff with an ongoing record so that they were able to monitor what was happening and what needed to be done; it provided the staff and participants with opportunities to reflect upon what they were doing and why.

INTERVIEWS

Each participant was interviewed at the beginning, middle, and conclusion of the project by Duckworth, the external staff interviewer. The interviewer took notes, as complete and verbatim as possible, which were typed and sent to each participant as a courtesy and for approval or correction. After being approved, the notes were passed on to the other staff members. The interviews were also tape recorded, for reference purposes.

Originally it seemed important that the interviews be conducted by someone who did not regularly attend the seminars. The interviewer, however, did attend a few seminar sessions during the year and most social events and was known by the participants to attend staff meetings. This level of involvement on her part did not seem to present a problem for the participants. On the contrary, some of them welcomed her profusely to the sessions which she attended and commented upon her absence; some clearly saw her as a "semi-insider" and felt some degree of affinity with her, hence were more comfortable during the interview than they would have been otherwise; only one person made a comment in an interview which she asked not to have handed on to the rest of the project staff.

We now think it was an advantage that the interviewer was well informed and therefore able to develop an independent view of the process as well as learning about it through meeting notes and staff meetings. We conclude that separation of the interviewer from the group is not of enormous importance where people are quite satisfied with what is happening and are communicating well.

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[12] See p. 10 for the list of records and data.

Yet we think there was a value in having some separation. We certainly felt more confidence in relying on the frankness of the responses to certain questions than if they had been asked by the director or the documentor. In addition, some of the questions asked were ones which checked out impressions gained during the seminar and could more reasonably be asked by a person who had not been a regular member. We also benefitted from four perspectives (of the three staff members and the graduate student participant observer) on the process and progress of the project.

The initial in-depth interview was intended to elicit information on the teacher's professional background and experience, expectations for the seminar and purpose for participating, perceptions of the school setting and her/his work within it, and her/his view of self and role in the classroom. Later interviews were intended to elicit information from the teachers concerning their responses to the seminar, satisfactions and disappointments with it, implications for their classrooms of the investigations being carried out, changes in their views or actions which were influenced by participation in the seminar, and further questions raised for them by their initial investigations. (See Appendix G.)

The questions on their professional backgrounds in the first interview did not provide a great deal of information which was useful in our analysis and evaluation of the project and certainly did not provide information which would allow us to make generalizations about their choice of topics based on their backgrounds or settings. However, it did allow us to know them better as people and was probably a relatively non-threatening way to begin.

The questions which we asked concerning their views of teaching we now see as too indirect and not as useful as we would have wished in eliciting their views. In order to understand their conceptions of teaching, we asked them to tell us about their classrooms; their strengths, weaknesses, sources of joy and dismay as teachers; their record-keeping and ways of evaluating; their sources of professional support. Questions which we designed for later interviews were more effective and we now think we would have had more information regarding their views on the issues dealt with in the seminars if we had asked the following more direct questions in both the initial and final interviews.

- What is teaching?
- What are you good at?
  How do you know?
- What do you need to work on?
  How do you know?
- How could you work on it?
  How would you know if it was improving?

- What bothers you in your teaching?
- What excites you in your teaching?
- What is research?

We also found, despite our intention to support the individual investigations of teachers and to take their work seriously, that we, like many researchers, let our concern with our agenda interfere with our coming to understand theirs. At the time, we presumed that our knowledge of their projects, derived from the seminars, was sufficient. Now we realize that we should have seen the interviews as a good way to learn more about their thoughts and feelings about their own projects and not just about their reactions to ours.

This would also have made the interviews more useful to the participants--for, as with the other sources of documentation, the teachers found them a valuable part of the project. In the first interview, we asked them what they thought their project might be, but did not ask its origins, or how they might go about it. We now would ask the following questions:

- What do you think you might choose to investigate?
- Why is that of interest to you?
- What information do you think you will need to have to answer your questions?
- How do you think you might go about getting that information?

In the second interview, we asked what they hoped to accomplish in the remaining time. Once again, we did not ask for their most thoughtful account of how their own project was going to date, what they were disappointed in or surprised by, what they still needed to know, how they intended to find that out.

We now believe that asking questions in the interviews on the same issues that were the seminar's agenda would have been more helpful both to the participants and to us.

Despite our recommendations for additions to the interviews, we found them an extremely valuable source of information, and the teachers did find that they offered another way to give thought to their issues. Teachers often commented to the interviewer, either before or after the "official" interview (and hence their comments often did not appear in the project records) that the interview was useful to them. In addition, several people noted their value in their journals or in response to questions about the strengths of the project:

> *[What should be kept or changed?] You could keep the interviews. [I would have thought the interviews were a*

drag?] Yeah, but they make you think. They're good practice. I read the transcripts and I think.

"How could anybody understand when I said it like that?" I thought I could have been more clear, and I never would have known that. It's good practice for expressing your thoughts clearly. (Interview)

The two interviews have been very useful. It makes me think. I speak at the moment and then afterwards I think. During the interview I put everything together in my mind, thoughts and feelings. It's a therapeutic session. It's very essential. (Interview)

Talked with Eleanor last night (my midway interview) and realized that I would like to arrange some observation time. I have to figure out what kind of schedule I want. I would like the person to observe, listening for relevant comments or situations relating to empathy and perspective-taking capabilities.

I realize now I've been negligent in observing and writing down things and hope to start doing that more again. (Journal)

Teachers in other settings have had similar responses. Staff developers working with teachers in North Dakota used interviews to gather information from teachers; they then found that teachers viewed them as a valuable opportunity to be reflective about their work, and so included them as a part of the staff development activities.[13] Ted Chittenden also found in his documentation of teachers' views of their classrooms and use of advisory services that teachers appreciated the opportunity to reflect on their work. He has proposed, not entirely in jest, that interviews alone could serve as an inexpensive, effective staff development program.[14] Although most people respond well to an opportunity to talk about and reflect on their work, it may be that teachers, in particular, need the experience of having their work and understandings taken seriously more often than now occurs.

It was interesting to us that several participants chose to use interviewers as a way to gain information in their own investigations.

JOURNALS

At the first session of the seminar, participants were provided with a loose leaf notebook in which they were asked to record a

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[13] Personal Communication, Vito Perrone, June 1981.

[14] Personal Communication, Ted Chittenden, February 1980.

number of things:

- *reactions to the seminar,*

- *reactions to questions other participants pose,*

- *things you notice in your class or things you wonder about in your class,*

- *suggestions to us or to other participants in response to their questions.* (Agenda Notes)

Every week, the journals were photocopied and filed. Either Evans or Stubbs would then write a response to the teachers which was always available at the next meeting. Those teachers who used the journal regularly spoke of the importance to them of this written response.

Originally we planned to use the thoughts recorded in participants' journals largely as a form of data for us. As in the case of the interviews, they,also, turned out to be useful to those participants who kept them. As noted earlier, we informed the participants that while they were to focus on what was significant to them, the staff would be looking for information about how the seminar was working and what they thought about it.

Specifically, as we explained to them in the first session, we were seeking information about those topics of most concern to teachers. We thought, thereby, that we might inform the research community of the topics which would be most useful to investigate. We also discussed our interest in learning what teachers already know about their own classrooms and our belief that if more of that knowledge were shared, teachers would become more confident of what they know and could then be encouraged to write about it. Third, as we indicated above, we were interested in people's thoughts about the seminar--what was working or not working. Finally, we were interested in anything else on participants' minds, especially the things we hadn't anticipated that related to the work we were doing together and to their professional lives.

Occasionally, we asked participants to write about specific topics hoping to get a record of their thoughts about certain topics in which we were interested. Only a few participants ever responded to any of these requests, reminding us again that they and we had different, though related, agendas--providing data for our analysis was not their first priority.

The journals proved to be a significant part of the project. They provided running records of the teachers' thinking, an opportunity for the teachers to use writing to learn, an opportunity for them to experience the value of writing and of being written back to, a means of communication between individual teachers and the staff, and eventually a summary statement. We now realize that they could

also have been a means of communication among the participants and could have helped people understand the project more quickly and more fully by knowing more of other participants' work and thought. Another time, we would more often photocopy certain sections with permission, to give to some or all of the other participants.

THE MEETING NOTES

All sessions were tape recorded for reference purposes, but the detailed accounts of each session, written by the documentor from her notes, were far more useful. Together, in retrospect, the meeting notes give a wonderful story of the seminar. At first we did not make full use of them. We did not distribute them to each participant; instead we placed a copy in a folder for their common use. After we decided to give them to everybody each week, they became a significant reference point. They helped people keep in touch and reminded them of the events and the agreements of the previous session. We believe that had they been distributed to everyone from the very beginning, they would have been useful to the teachers in conceptualizing the process in which they were involved.

THE DAVIS REPORT

Although Davis' field study of the project was not part of our original research agenda, it is a fine instance of research that served both her and the participants.

As arranged upon her entry to the group, Davis' report was was made available to the staff in January. They found it descriptive, thoughtful, and valuable and chose to distribute a shortened version of it to the participants.[15] (See Appendix H.) Members of the seminar were irvited to discuss it at a session and in the second interview. They responded that the report increased their understanding of the project and, in some cases, gave them a new model of research.

> *Since I'm interested in the process, [Christine's] articulation of process was stimulating. It's reassuring that someone else thought as I did that the process itself was important. I've never been in a group where one person described the process. It's a luxurious experience.* (Interview)

> *It's great to have a graduate student, that aspect has been one of the most important. Her report was one of the highest points. It wrapped up everything that was going on. That's what I'd like to be able to do for five minutes every week.* (Interview)

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[15] The Davis report was also distributed to members of the North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation as part of a presentation made to that group in February 1981.

What's good about it is that she put everything into perspective. I could sit back and say, "Oh, this is what we've been doing."

Christine's report made me think that research like that can be useful, can help in clarifying ideas. I used to put down that kind of research. If it didn't have numbers and statistics, it was far from the truth. But it can be illuminating, it can give a lot of light. (Interview)

One of the teachers wrote to Davis several weeks after the distribution of the report:

Dear Christine:

After reading over your paper a few times I realized that your analysis of the seminar and your insights into how it functions have given me a clearer focus as to what my experience has been in the group. The explanations you give regarding the philosophical basis of this project have helped me to see myself in the role of researcher in the classroom.

As I see it there are two levels of expectations operating in the seminar. One set of expectations is on the "how to do it" level. This level is clearly spelled out and supported. The other level is the philosophical one. And this was not clear to me until I read your paper. I wonder if there is an advantage in discussing the philosophical level earlier on in the seminar? For me, it seems that there would be. (Letter)

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

One of our original goals was to investigate the form and content of professional literature which teachers find useful. To facilitate this and to respond to the participants' interests and needs, the staff circulated articles and books, encouraged teachers to take them home, engaged a research assistant to find materials in which people had expressed an interest, and asked people to keep detailed records of books and articles they read and their evaluations of them.

Though the participants did quite a lot of reading and lending of books or articles to others, record-keeping was sparse and not as useful as we had hoped. We were not, therefore, able to assemble a comprehensive list of books of use to teachers. We were able, however, to find some patterns and some variety in teachers' evaluations.

Several teachers responded positively to books and articles written by other teachers or based on classroom observations. Teachers felt they gained not only from learning about classrooms other than their own, but also from the opportunity to have models for developing their own writing. During the year, teachers often expressed the time pressures in their lives. Those time pressures were also sometimes reflected in their evaluations of their reading. They tended to like books or articles which were short and could be read quickly.

> *I like reading observations of different types of classrooms. It would be interesting to hear different ideas about the way different classrooms function and what adults in those classrooms have learned. And also in terms of doing observational writing. It wasn't so much things that I would do in my classroom, but it got me interested in other schools and it was also interesting to me just to see the value of writing down more information. That was the most significant kind of reading.* (Transcript of Final Session)

> *I'm enjoying* The Logic of Action.[16] *Amazing observations of kids and interpretations of the observations. Imparts a real excitement about learning which I feel is the essential factor in teaching but which often gets lost in the daily grind. A nice rejuvenation for me.* (Journal)

> *Articles by other teachers about their classrooms [are useful]. Outlook, The Children's Thinking Newsletter, the North Dakota monographs. [I get] new things to think about, new ways to look at my kids. Or they're supportive and feed into my thoughts. It's encouraging to read an account of someone who is doing what you're doing. It encourages one to continue moving in the*

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[16] Frances Hawkins, The Logic of Action: Young Children at Work (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974).

direction that one is going. It also encourages my writing.[17] (Interview)

[The reading I find helpful is] on other teachers or what other teachers wrote. (Interview)

I liked some of the articles, I can read an article in a short piece of time and get something out of it and then can can read another article. (Transcript of Final Session)

Short articles of two kinds [are helpful]. Personal accounts or research that is written on two or three pages. (Interview)

Teachers also found books or articles useful or interesting which were directly related to their investigations. Even when they questioned some aspects of the author's argument they still sometimes found parts of a book useful to their thinking.

[I find it useful to read] anything related to Cloze. For example, there was one about two women doing a project and they gave Cloze as an instructional procedure and they did reading miscues, they taped it, they instructed to the kids' errors. The kids looked for the other kids' mistakes. (Interview)

Pflaum, Pacarella, "Interactive effects of prior reading achievement and training in context on the reading of learning-disabled children" given to me by N.R.[18] *Extremely helpful summary of the research.* (Reading Record and Evaluation Sheet)

It all started with an abstract idea and a personal experience that coincided. At the same time that I was reading about "the nature of conflict" in a textbook, Conflict and its Resolution, written by Deutsch (I think), I was experiencing a conflict in my teaching; some girls did not want to learn in my classes while I wanted them to.[19] (Journal)

This book (Qualitative Evaluative Methods),[20] *the chapter on interviewing and also "learning through dilemmas" [were useful to me].*[21] *It was great. It goes through the dilemmas*

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[17] Stubbs, The Children's Thinking Newsletter.

[18] Pflaum & Pacarella, RRQ Vol. SVI #1, (1980).

[19] Morton Deutsch, Conflict and its Resolution (New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1965).

[20] Michael Patton, Qualitative Evaluation Methods, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, Inc., 1980).

[21] Ann & Harold Berlak, Dilemmas of Schooling, (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., forthcoming).

in the school system. It spoke to my needs. It was some research done in England. (Interview)

I'm reading on moral development, Kohlberg.... Oh, and Robert Selman, too. Peggy sent me to hear him. Perspective-taking, that makes a lot of sense. Before I only had vague ideas. Selman clarified a lot of what I'm looking for. From my reading I gather that my kids should be (at a stage in their development) just before they can understand another kid's point of view but close enough so that it's worth looking for. And then it's good to see if they're right, in my sample of 17 children. (Interview)

Zick Rubin, Children's Friendships.[22] *Reactions to the last few chapters. P. 88. "There is reason to think, incidentally, that girls are more sensitive to the vicissitudes or relationships than boys are, for reasons that we will consider in the next chapter. It may be in part for this reason that women seem to handle separation and loss more effectively than men in adulthood as well."*

It is interesting to me that he feels this. I would say that women deal with separation more as an issue. Men often don't acknowledge it as a problem so in that way maybe women deal with it better because they deal with it. But separation seems to be a much more painful process for many women--as well as girls.

P. 116. "An important advantage of mixed-age groups is allowing children more flexibility in finding peers." I agree. I think this has a real positive side in a school setting in terms of getting rid of the stigma of being behind as well as children progressing at their own speed where there are more levels represented and more "legitimately." (Journal)

Since some participants expressed an interest in writing up their projects for their own satisfaction or for possible publication but felt hesitant about their ability to write, we bought one copy of Writing Without Teachers.[23] It was so well liked by the first teacher

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[22]Zick Rubin, Children's Friendships, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980).

[23]Peter Elbow, Writing Without Teachers, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975).

who borrowed it, and then the second, that we bought all the copies locally available to shorten the waiting time for that particular book

As some teachers lived through a difficult year, either because of stresses in their own classrooms or because they worked in Boston where they were faced not only with the usual difficulties of an urban school system but with the threat the schools might close, they read articles or books related to their struggles. They found some supportive, some interesting but questionable, and others unrealistic.

> *I read a newspaper article on the Boston Public Schools. That was more interesting to read at the time, how they perceived the problems that were occurring in the Boston Public Schools. It was interesting to compare their view with what I feel from experience. I sort out if what the person is saying is actually true or not true, from where I am at the time.* (Transcript of Final Session)

> *Frank Smith, Understanding Reading, he pooh-poohs phonics. I'm horrified--he must deal with only terribly bright youngsters with perfect perception.*[24] (Journal)

> *Reading Without Nonsense, Frank Smith.*[25] *Chapter 4. "Shallows and depths of language." Smith presumes that every potential reader has a well-developed visual memory. Very painful reading when you deal with slow (seventh grade) readers who just can't recognize words or make wild guesses based on the first letter of the word.* (Journal)

Teachers varied a great deal in their preferences for more practical or more theoretical writings and sometimes found the professional literature condescending toward teachers, but agreed that easy access to professional literature was an important luxury for teachers.

> *I loved the booklets that Christine brought in from [Australia] about parents and teachers. I went through a lot of them, there were lots of ideas, nuts and bolts. I read one on reading and language and one on writing. They were very good. Chock-full of*

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[24] Frank Smith, Understanding Reading (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978).

[25] Frank Smith, Reading Without Nonsense, (New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1979).

ideas. I like applications--immediate feedback. (Interview)

I want to do some reading about different ways that different teachers use drawing and whether they assess the relationship between drawing and skill development. I have a suspicion that not a whole lot exists.

I asked the teachers too [in the interviews for my project], what was influential. Not one could dredge up anything. In all honesty, the most helpful to me has nothing overtly to do with teaching. The ideas I've had of things to do with kids have come out of reading conversations that Piaget wrote about, not about teaching practice. The teachers I interviewed said that what influenced them was talking with kids, observing kids, drawing conclusions, checking with other people. Practical experience is more valuable than reading.

The problem is, the stuff that falls our way to read is pretty specific, practical stuff--not very broad. In the long run I would like to read broader, more theoretical things, so we could draw conclusions and make applications. The periodicals in teacher's rooms are not very helpful. (Interview)

One I read was interesting. It was hard to digest.... There are a lot of negative things, like teachers will take courses only for points and not for enjoyment or for extra knowledge to give to their students. They were getting on to teachers. I don't know [if it is unfair to teachers]. (Interview)

I would love to have access to Gutman Library.[26] *[Comment on possible refunding of the project.]* (Journal)

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[26] Gutman Library serves the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

STAFFING AND BUDGET

Though our total budget was certainly adequate, we found we had not very accurately projected our needs in some categories.

Both the documentor and the director were budgeted at one-quarter time for the year--one day per week during the forty weeks school was in session, five days during school vacations for interim data analysis and planning, and twenty days during July and August for report writing.

We planned that both the director and the documentor would attend each session of the seminar, since it seemed important that the director be free of note-taking responsibilities while chairing the seminar meetings. We also planned to have the director and the documentor respond to the participants' journal entries in alternate weeks. Both of these procedures worked well. As the year progressed, it became obvious that it was advantageous that the chairperson not be distracted by the task of documenting and that the differing perspectives of at least two respondents on the journals was useful. We also believe it would be possible and effective to rotate the roles of seminar leader and documentor if the two people were comfortable with that arrangement.

Other tasks for which they were responsible, however, took more time than we expected. More of their time was needed early in the year to carry out recruitment and, during the school year, to hold individual conferences with participants and provide teachers with books and articles in relation to topics of their interest. We hired a consultant part-time for a few weeks in the fall to assist with recruitment. When we found we had underestimated the teachers' interest in library searches and, therefore, the time that was required, we hired another consultant to carry out that task for participants and staff. That worked well for both those needs. We judged, however, that part-time consultants who were unfamiliar with the project and the individual investigations of the participants would not be able to conduct effective individual conferences with them. The result was that we held fewer conferences than we would have liked and spent more time on the project than the quarter-time which had been allocated. We would recommend that the director and documentor each be budgeted at one-half time and would also recommend that access to a university library for each of the participants and staff be included in the budget.

The one-fifth time we projected for the interviewer was a fairly accurate estimate of the time needed. She conducted three interviews with each of fifteen participants during the school year, attended staff meetings and some seminar sessions, participated in interim analysis and planning, and spent twenty days in July and August in analysis of the data and preparation of the report.

We also found we had more need for secretarial services than the half-time we budgeted. That was due in part to our circulating more materials among participants than we anticipated. We not only began to provide copies of all meeting notes to each of the participants, but as teachers began to write drafts of reports on their projects we circulated each draft to each of the participants. Writers benefited from the wide range of responses and feedback to their efforts and in mid-August some are continuing to rewrite and polish their pieces. We found that when the teachers reached the stage of writing up their inquiries they needed a great deal of secretarial support, for both typing and duplicating, and since we propose that the writing be given greater prominence in future projects it is clear that the work load warranted more secretarial time.

As a result of our decision to distribute meeting notes and participants' draft reports, we found our duplicating costs were also higher than we anticipated.

As mentioned earlier, teachers used less consultant time in the form of interviewers and observers than we anticipated. We think, however, that given more staff time for individual conferences, participants might have made more use of those resources. We would not, therefore, recommend less than the three half-days per participant per month that was budgeted.

CONCLUSION

We set out to provide a forum for teachers in which they could talk seriously with peers to clarify and deepen their understandings of their work and to encourage them to make their knowledge more public. We are persuaded that the project was an effective professional development activity for the teachers and that the evidence for that is clear. The evidence is also clear that the structure enabled this group to start building on each other's knowledge. The evidence is less clear that the structure can contribute effectively to systematizing and developing a cumulative body of practitioners' knowledge--which requires publication in order to be widely accessible to teachers not in the group. At the close of the project only one participant had reached the point in her writing at which she was ready to submit it for publication. On the other hand, several participants, though they have not yet written anything they view as finished, are continuing to write and rewrite for possible publication. We anticipate that some, but not all, will complete their plans.

We are not persuaded, however, that our goal is unachievable by these means. We have included throughout this report recommendations for changes which we would make if we were to repeat it. There are a number of those recommended changes which we think would make it more likely that teachers would write and publish reports of their investigations. We see those changes as contributing to their conceptualization of the project and its implications for their views of themselves as professionals; to their defining and designing the investigations more quickly; and to more writing on their part. Some of the relevant recommended changes are highlighted here:

- give more emphasis early in the year to examples of other teachers' investigations and writing,
- distribute meeting notes to seminar sessions,
- distribute more selections from journals and responses to other participants,
- schedule more small group and individual conferences,
- schedule more brainstorming sessions on ways of defining questions, ways of collecting data, and ways to judge the results,
- establish guidelines for presentations of questions,
- incorporate writing activities in the seminar sessions,

- place more emphasis in the interviews on the individual projects,
- ask participants to include schedules for the year in their plans,
- hold some social events earlier in the year.

We have no hesitation in recommending this format as a staff development activity to support teachers becoming more reflective about their work. Though we believe it would be improved by the changes we have recommended, we were impressed by the teachers, their participation in the group, and their persistence in the complex task of furthering their understanding of their students and themselves. They worked hard in the seminars; they supported each other and came to appreciate each other; and they became more analytical in their responses to questions, plans, and results.

It was clear that they were also pleased with the project, the group, and their own involvement in it:

> *[If I were to describe this to someone who wanted to know whether to take part] I think I would begin by saying I think you should take part and let me tell you why. What you will be doing is understanding the way you teach and discussing with a group of other teachers who are concerned about education. You will be sharing a project with this group. You will be listening to their projects. You will be discussing students from different schools and different systems. You will be given a lot of technical assistance. It's great that something like this project could exist.* (Interview)

> *[The strong point of the seminar is] arriving at an understanding of the way each one of us proceeds with our research. I hear "What do you want to know about this topic," the whole thinking process about arriving at your topic. It's happening. I'm happy. It's raising my conscious awareness of daily operations. The seminar has made me conscious of thinking at the end of each day, "What happened today?" I do think about it.* (Interview)

> *It's a group committed to teaching and to improving teaching. It's a dynamic, interesting, stimulating group in which you can develop your ideas as well as learn the ideas of other people. It's a group I looked forward to going to every week. . . . (Another teacher in my building who) came with me to one of the seminars would love to come. She was really turned on. [What she saw that she liked was] people working on a variety of projects; the support among members of the group.* (Interview)

I have felt all along that the seminar has been very helpful to me. I've been able to articulate my feelings. It helps clarify how I want to proceed. (Interview)

I remain enthusiastic in the end as in the beginning. (Interview)

We too looked forward to coming every week and remain as enthusiastic in the end as in the beginning. We should add that we do and do not view these teachers as exceptional. We feel privileged to have worked with them on this enterprise. But we do not believe they represent a small minority of committed or competent teachers. When teachers are given the opportunity to be researchers of their own practice, many will respond enthusiastically and work with persistence.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

ANNOUNCEMENT

SEMINAR FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS -- 1980-1981

Do you have questions or concerns about your classroom which you could more easily or more effectively investigate with the help of other teachers and consultants? Would you like to share what you have learned with other teachers? If so, consider joining the seminar described below.

Classroom Observations and Investigations

Our project will help teachers design and carry out investigations in their classrooms. With the help of a discussion leader and other teachers, each person will have an opportunity to identify topics to be investigated and choose methods of collecting information. A grant from the National Institute of Education makes it possible to hire a substitute or aide to free the teacher to conduct small group interviews or give tests, to hire another teacher or a graduate student to observe in the room, or to use videotapes or tape recorders.

Examples from Teachers in Pilot Programs:

I work very hard to encourage students to help each other. I feel the students do become more cooperative as the year goes on. I'd like to know if that is really true; I'd like to have something more than intuition and impressions to go on.

I'd like someone to do an objective study of the students' creative writing and reports.

I'm having a terrible time this year. By 10:00 or 10:30 every day the room is chaotic -- some of the kids are really acting up and lots of the rest of them are no longer working. For some reason I can't seem to figure out what to do about it.

I have a little girl in my room who almost never talks. From across the room it looks like she has real interactions with Mary and Billy during recess, but when I come over she clams up. I'd like to know what those interactions are about and whether she asserts herself with them even if she doesn't with me.

What should I be doing about the mainstreamed kids I have in my room? They never seem to be there long enough to become a part of the class or to really accomplish much. I wonder what they think of all the coming and going and how I could make it easier for them to work in my room.

The Project

Teachers who choose to particpate will meet from 4:00 to 6:00 once a week at Technical Education Research Centers in Harvard Square. Enrollment is limited to fifteen. We seek diversity in the teacher participants and in the types of schools in which they teach. We may be able to reimburse some child-care or transportation costs.

The project staff will document the seminar and teachers' reactions to it. We will report our finding to NIE and to educators interested in staff development and teacher research. We hope to show that such a seminar can be very useful to teachers, that teachers' contributions to educational research deserve more support and recognition, and that research can be made more relevant to practice by looking at questions posed by experienced teachers. No teachers will be required to write reports of their investigations. Those who wish to do so for their own use or for possible publications will be aided by an editor.

To join the seminar or to receive additional information, contact: Claryce Evans, Director of Teacher-initiated Research Project, TERC, 8 Eliot Street, Cambridge, 02138. Tel: 547-3890 or 628-6003.

APPENDIX B

Examples of Teachers' Initial Questions and Concerns

The following unedited examples of teachers' initial questions are taken from opening sessions of pilot programs.

1. The concerns of the students don't seem to be supported by the content of the curriculum. What are they really thinking about? What do they talk about behind the lockers? Maybe I could use their real concerns to teach the skills it's necessary for them to learn. (Grade 6)

2. If the kids are chatting and are not working on my agenda, do I really need to harness them, to remind them, in order to keep the curriculum going? Do they sometimes get back to work on their own? Do some kids sometimes remind a group to get back to the task? (Grade 4)

3. How do I use my time in the classroom? Am I interrupted in talking with a student or a group of students as often as I think I am? Is there some way I could change that? (Grade 4)

4. What goes on in the block corner? The conversations change when I come over because of my role as the teacher. (Grade 2)

5. I'd like someone to do an objective study of the students' constructions. (Grade 3)

6. I work very hard to encourage students to help each other. I feel that the students do become more cooperative as the year goes on. I'd like to know if that is really true, I'd like to have something more than intuition and impressions to go on. (Grade 1)

7. Some students seem to react very positively to certain parts of my course. Those students at other times, and other students, seem to be just sitting through it. I'd like to know why they respond when they do respond and why they don't when they don't. I'd like to know whether they respond to any of their other courses. Is the difference in the context, in the structure, in the method of instruction or in the way it is introduced? (High School Social Studies)

8. My kids always do very well on the achievement tests except for one section. I don't really believe in the tests but I think the reason they do poorly on that section is that they work slowly. I don't think that it's because they can't do it. I'd like to know to see if that's true. (Grade 1)

9. I have a lot of equipment but I don't think the kids are using all of it. I'd like someone to record what they use so I can put the rest of it in the closet for a while. (Kindergarten)

10. I have a new student in my room who speaks very little English. I'd like to know what happens over the next few weeks. Will the other students who know Spanish translate for her? Will they be her first new friends? When will she start to develop friendships with the English-speaking children? How does that happen? (Grade 2)

11. I have a little girl in my room who almost never talks. She does sometimes play with Mary or with Billy. From across the room, it looks like she has real interactions with those two students, but when I come over she clams up. I'd like to know more about what those interactions are about and whether she asserts herself. (Grade 1)

12. How much help should I be giving the new "mainstreamed" handicapped kids in my class in connecting up with the other kids? How can I find out what's really going on with them? (Grade 4)

APPENDIX C

THIRD DRAFT: F.R.

Research Outline

The manner in which I have chosen to present my research is the short story format. This style seems to me more appealing to a teacher audience. My preference would normally be a more quantitive analysis of the subject and data, but in this case I opted for the short story type of format. Some might argue that this would be at the opposite pole of a scientific examination of a phenomenon. My opinion is that if one advocates an anecdotal method of examination and explanation of human behavior, why disguise it with an outward semblance of objectivity. I decided, thus, to write a short story about my research. In other words, I chose to be as subjective as possible. I will present to you reality as I perceived it and why I saw the circumstances as thus. I will then leave it to the reader to make the last judgement and to complete the story, for my purpose in choosing this style is to create an understanding of how middle school students act in a school setting. One final word: this short story is not at all fictional; the facts are real. I did not invent anything; everything was presented to me, and I acted or reacted to the circumstances.

I.

"We'll sure miss you next year," G. said. "This program is going to be very empty. Kids won't be getting any Theatre Arts or (another special course)." He continued, "It'll be kind of boring."

"What do you mean boring," I queried, stretching out the "o."

"I mean, we had some good times together this year. Besides, we teachers won't have anyone to pick on."

I knew to what he was referring. Since I had started teaching (the special course) in the Boston Public Schools through a federally-funded program three years ago fresh out of college, I had been working at two schools; Mondays and Tuesdays, I went to one school , and Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, I taught at another school with him. The central office for my program was in the School Committee building, where all the new and innovative materials were kept. I was always bringing new slide shows, films and games that the students and I loved.

"So, are you going to teach next year?" he asked, placing his cup of coffee on the table and cleaning his moustache with his thumb and index finger, as though to press it. He rested his chin on those fingers, with his elbow on the table, and smiled inquisitively.

"Why do you ask that?" I snapped suspiciously. I hadn't liked his earlier remark about the other teachers picking on me, even though I knew he was alluding to the frequent loud, high-voltage discussions I loved to engage in with my co-workers. These discussions usually ended with G. telling me I was too naïve and idealistic to really understand the practical issues involved with teaching. As a result of these discussions, I had created an image among all the other teachers of being too intellectual and somewhat out of reality. They all believed I hadn't yet been exposed to the cruel realities of teaching: being a home room teacher, having duty stations, and all that entailed from being in one school five days a week. I viewed their remarks and answers to my questions as a reflection of their lack of dedication and high expectations of teaching.

G. waited a second before explaining his reason for asking me my teaching plans for the upcoming year. "I just think you're going to have discipline problems. You won't be able to control your kids." He looked at me with his intense green eyes, as though to deeply involve me in his opinion. I was so used to G.'s intensity, bracing expressions and loud straightforwardness, that I returned his gaze with an even more intense stare. "Keep going," I demanded.

"I'm not saying you're a lousy teacher. I think you're excellent," he quickly uttered as though afraid of hurting me.

Our relationship was a unique one. Since my first day of teaching, G. had taken me under his tutelage. He considered me unwitting prey of the administration. He thought I volunteered frequently to do more than was required and that I never got credit for my deeds, that all praise was usurped by (one or another administrator). He would warn me of the

real and dirty politics played by people in power in the "system," how leaders within the administration didn't care at all about education. Three difficult years later, I have learned that G. was quite accurate in his assessment. I have seen (one administrator) worry about the form of my presentations to either the students or the Principal, with no thought given to content. At that time, with misgivings and doubts, I began to observe the other teachers, to see how wise his words were. I soon found that the teachers who were most respected were the ones whose attendance was high, whose duty stations were always covered, and whose teaching style was one of "not making waves."

G. knew that the (administrators) were waiting for the right opportunity to capitalize on my enthusiasm and naivete. They had tried it on him before without success. We had frequent long talks about the battles he had fought and won with them. Once, when (one administrator) had tried to discontinue (a program in one school) and start it up in another middle school, he had organized the faculty, parents, community, and students into a power bloc and had forced (the administrator) to reinstate the program. He told me he knew at the time that she was trying to return a favor to (another administrator) and that the move would have been totally "political." Another time, he had successfully fought the removal of gym classes from the Bilingual Students' schedule. He was respected for both his commitment to the students and the fact that he couldn't be bought.

Neither had I made a deal with them. I didn't care about recognition or credit. I did my job because I loved it and drew great pleasure from it. Teachers would frequently ask me what I was after, why I was involved in so many things at once. They reasoned I either needed the overtime pay or I was jockeying for a position "downtown" in the administration.

And now, three years later, we were having another of these conversations, but this time the difference was that I wasn't going to return to the (school where G. works).

"I'm sure I won't have any discipline problems with the kids next year. Having my own classroom will make a big difference," I replied. The students will automatically see me as having power. I won't be the outsider anymore; they will see me daily, not half a week. Besides, I have all summer to plan my lessons and my approach to classroom management . . ."

I could have kept going on and on but the school bell rang out with a high-pitched trumpet-like sound, thus marking the end of our fifteen minute break.

II.

Where did it all go wrong? Both the behavior and the attitudes of B., C., R., H., L., and M. were unexplainable to me. Is this what G. had warned me about?, I pondered in dismay. But I've done whatever I can. It was already mid-October and I wondered if this problem was going to continue throughout the year. Maybe it's because I lost my classroom, I thought.

When I had been assigned to the (School), I had been told that I would be replacing a teacher who was taking a leave of absence for one year. P., the teacher whose room and students I was to take, had recently undergone open-heart surgery and was not expected back that year. Because of his lengthy absences during the previous year, his students were very much behind in mathematic skills. I looked forward with anticipation to improving just that. I decorated the room, and developed a "code of conduct." I became very strict, demanding a great deal from my students, and setting very high standards. This time, no student would call me "F." as I had encouraged in previous years; they were all to call me "Mr. R." I became task-oriented and did not give in to flexibility. I prepared my lesson plans well each day. In short, I was creating a perfect structure, even if it didn't feel quite right to me. I was the homeroom teacher, and I had to make sure the students knew I would be in control the whole setting. Mine was going to be a classroom fully under its teacher's control. I would make G. eat his words.

On yellow posterboard with bright red letters, was the code of conduct I had taped on the bulletin board on the left wall with two-sided adhesive left over from my (special course) days. To its left was the blackboard I had washed carefully the first day of school, and above that, attached in the same way as the code of conduct, was a series of geometric shapes cut out of multi-colored construction paper. One corner of the room I had designated the "Game Center." There I kept all the films, slide shows, and board games I had loved so much in the past three years, neatly organized on a table. Above that table a sign taped to the wall read "Game Center."

My code of conduct was simple. It consisted of 10 sentences, all short and each stated in an affirmative manner. "Raise your hand before speaking"; "Get up from your seat only with permission"; "Chew gum outside the classroom"; "Talk to me first if you feel like fighting"; etc.

I went over each rule first thing every morning. R. got up without asking permission, and I made her sit down again and ask me before getting up. The whole class ridiculed both the code and me. A discussion ensued in which I insisted on keeping that rule but suggested changing some of the others. They felt I was treating them too childishly and that since they were already in eighth grade, I should treat them like the seniors of the school that they were. I decided I shouldn't give in so soon; I did not want to be thought of as too democratic as I had been in the past.

But I began to yield, little by little. By the end of the first month, only one rule was in effect: "Get up from your seat only with permission." They all chewed gum, ate candy, threw papers on the floor, etc. Finally, I threw the code of conduct into the wastebasket.

One day, I tried to resolve a fight between students by talking to them softly and persuasively. It didn't work. The tallest boy in the class finally had to physically break up the fight. He turned to me and said, "You should have broken it up. You're the teacher, not me. You're too soft." His words hurt me a lot. I understood from them that being physically soft meant cowardliness. I made the excuse that I was afraid of breaking my glasses, but I knew he didn't believe me.

B. was one of the first to protest when I sent R. back to her seat. R. had given her a folded yellow piece of paper similar to the ones I kept in my desk drawer. A note was written on the paper. B. had laughed. She told me very clearly and loudly that if she were R., she never would have sat down. "That's a stupid rule, anyways," she said. "I'll get up whenever I want to. Nobody's gonna boss me around." She swung her body from left to right, with hands half-open and her index finger pointing downward, and looked sharply around the room at the other students' faces, her eyes finally resting on my face. She had once before gone home, leaving the line at dismissal time, saying she had many errands to run and that my waiting for the line to be quiet was taking too long.

I decided to do nothing, hoping my silence would make her understand her behavior was bothering me, and that although I wasn't using all my authority and power to stop her, I could do so if I wanted.

In reality, I did not want to yell, nor get angry or upset. I did not want to punish her; it was too early in the year for that. I wanted my patience to conquer her. Everything is out of control, I thought. Now it's mid-October. Is this going to last all year?

Then suddenly P. returned to work one day, two months into the school year. He should have taken the year off, I thought.

"I told them I would come back. This is so typical."

P. looked around the room. Everything was different. I had removed the pencil sharpener from the sill of the picture window and screwed it onto my desk. This was to avoid distraction; last year, I had seen students take about two minutes to sharpen a pencil, looking out the window at their friends and calling out to them. I had also pushed the desk from the corner of the room into the middle to create a more commanding presence. I wanted the students to always be aware of me. In fact, though, I never sat at my desk during class, and used it only for individual conferences or during exams. I had taken down all the old posters and replaced them with new ones I had gotten at an international cross-cultural conference during the summer and carefully saved for this time. There was a tanned, beautiful woman lazing on a beach in Venezuela; a man and a young child talking earnestly on a park bench in Brazil; and two young lovers looking at a gorgeous sunset in Puerto Rico. Above them all was a sign with blue letters on pink posterboard saying, "Buenvenidos a esta clase. Welcome to this classroom." I had broken the lock on the closet, taken out all the math textbooks, and distributed them to the students. I had not replaced the lock. P. looked at it and sniffed.

He did not comment on anything, but I could see his face changing color, contorting and twisting into different shapes and expressions. I felt sorry for him and did not want to cause him any trouble. After all, he had been in (another city) for three months, and although he made a great recovery, you never know with heart problems; they can come on at any time.

"I took over your room because the Principal assigned me here. I changed a lot of things. Everyone said you would be out this year," I said. "I guess now that you're back I'll have to find some other place," I sighed.

And thus the problems began. S. felt threatened by my presence; she was afraid of losing her job. Because she didn't have tenure, she would have to be transferred now that there was one teacher too many. P.'s dignity had been violated, and he wanted me to feel guilty. I defended myself to both of them by pointing out that it had been the administration's decision, not mine.

I felt so guilty that I talked to the District Office, and pleaded that they let S. stay. She took over teaching Science, which she loved and I took over her Social Studies classes. We shared her classroom, and I made sure that she and I created a friendly working environment. Teachers can sometimes have big egos. Sharing a classroom can be a miserable arrangement. Her classroom had already been decorated, so I squished in some maps, a globe, and a desk with a warped top which I had found abandoned in the gymnasium. I felt very depressed. I wasn't going to have my own classroom after all. I had been so excited with P.'s room; now I had to start over again.

"I haven't talked to you since the end of the summer. You don't call; you don't visit. You don't remember your friends, or what?" For some reason, G. sounded very far away. There was too much static and interference.

"I can't hear you," I answered. "Hang up and I'll call you right back. Are you at home?"

I knew G. would want to know about my classes, my students, and my setup in general. I wasn't prepared to tell him all the details. I knew that all was not working out to my liking, and I feared his disapproval. I knew that teaching Social Studies, one class of Math (so P. wouldn't get tired out), and lately, gym, was not one of the most desirable positions to be in. And, as if that wasn't enough, I didn't even have my own classroom, the key ingredient I had stressed for successful teaching. In addition, to make matters worse, some girls in the lowest level were driving me crazy.

I pushed open the swinging door, and entered the kitchen. Grabbing a glass from the sink, I filled it with chips of ice and poured coffee and cream over them. I crossed the dining room again, entered into the living room, and sank down on the sofa to what could well be a long conversation. I picked the phone up, glad that my branch of the telephone company had not changed its lines to allow for push-button phones. I had a red princess phone which a friend had left me the day he returned to France, and I had stored it with some other junk in the basement. Now, here on the sofa with my iced coffee, in the middle of October, I could take my time dialing. 833- . . .

"What took you so long?" he protested. "Listen, are you busy or something?"

"No," I said. "Just pouring myself something to drink. What a surprise. So how's . . . how's work?"

"We just finished our testing and leveling," he replied. We came out with five levels, sort of like last year, you remember. So the way it looks is this. One level is made up of those students who are high in both languages but not as high as those who belong to the top level. Those students are very high in either language and in math. The lowest level, again like last year, is illiterate. We have two groups of semi-linguals. They know Spanish and English at the same low to medium level. Those students belong to the medium levels." He paused.

"So have you done anything like that in (your school)?" he asked cynically, as though to make sure I knew that the Bilingual Program at (his school) could never be surpassed in organization and quality by the one at (mine).

"What do you mean? Maybe better than that," I quickly replied defensively, bursting into a false laugh. I paused, had a sip of iced coffee, and continued. "We have only four levels, you know."

"How many teachers?" he asked.

"Five."

"Why don't you make five levels?"

"We have only four classrooms. I have been fighting for an extra classroom but there's none available. This year the school has more students than ever, five hundred and fifty to be exact. That's because it's a magnet school that attracts kids from all over the city. Have you ever been (there)?"

"Don't you remember? Two summers ago, you and I worked there for a summer reading program. That was fun. I earned more money that year than ever before. It's an okay school. It looks like a warehouse or a factory from the outside, that's all, with broken windows and dirty walls. But anyway, you couldn't get an extra classroom. Who travels around? You?"

"That's right. Me."

"Oh, God!"

"There wasn't any other solution. I didn't want to hurt anybody. Besides, I'm used to it by now. Don't forget I've been doing it for the last three years. This time it's better. At least I'm only in one school."

I did not want to accept the fact that I was very depressed and unhappy because of not having my own classroom, that all the organization and structure I had worked out over the summer and started implementing in P.'s classroom would be thrown away.

I continued. "What I did was make sure that all of us participated in the leveling process. I'm not the team leader; D. is. She has a great deal of experience in ESL. And I made sure that the Spanish scores were taken into account. The Spanish teacher, J., is not outspoken enough. I guess it's because she just came from Puerto Rico and her English skills are not very good."

"So what kind of leveling do you have?" G. yawned. "Excuse me."

"We have four groups; two groups are bilingual with higher skills in English. By the way, all of them speak English. These two top groups have high skills in Spanish. The other two gruops are semi-linguals. Very low skills in both languages."

"It sounds like many of those kids shouldn't be in Bilingual," G. attested. "I mean, bilingual education is supposed to be transitional in Massachusetts. The law says it--Chapter 71A of the Compensatory Education Act."

The greatest controversy among bilingual educators lies in whether a transitional, three-year bilingual program with great emphasis on ESL is the best method for educating Limited English Speaking Ability (LESA) populations or if instead, a maintenance program should be used, where instruction is conducted in both languages with no time considerations.

"That's right," I replied. "Some of them shouldn't be in the Bilingual Program. But the problem is what to do with the semi-linguals, low reading and writing skills in both languages. Shouldn't we emphasize English? I mean, some of them are in the eighth grade. What kind of future will they have?" I sipped the last drop of iced coffee, and twirled the glass as though to produce more coffee from the almost-dissolved ice cubes. I chomped on pieces of ice, crunching in G.'s ear.

"Are you happy there? Is everything going okay in your classes?" he asked.

"Everything's going fine," I said.

I had to lie. I wasn't prepared to be viewed in a disadvantaged situation, even though I knew G. would have helped me improve my effectiveness; he was very good at teacher training. He had once told me to be careful whom I asked for help in teaching. "Some supervisors and principals don't know how to help you improve. They see your asking as a negative thing. They think you are no good. You could be the greatest teacher, but if someday you feel you want to be even better and ask them for their help, they'll think you're asking because you don't know what you're doing. Instead of taking it positively, they hold it against you that you asked."

I knew I needed help. How to get it was the problem. Arthur Miller's words and my review of my diary had inspired me and given me hope. Maybe writing about it would help me. Somehow I felt, however, that telling G. of my teaching problems with some of the students was not the right thing to do, in spite of his understanding nature. I did not want to be vulnerable to criticism, but wanted to handle it by myself.

He broke into my reverie. "I'm glad everything's going okay. Listen, it's getting late and I gotta go to sleep. Let's get together soon." He hung up.

I was constantly thinking about it. I was experiencing it daily. I couldn't believe it. Maybe it was only happening to me. Maybe I wasn't experienced enough. Maybe it was because of my training in experimental social psychology, where controlling variables in the lab was an asset, but far removed from the real world. I had fallen into education by chance and by pecuniary need. Where had everything gone wrong? There must be something in either my teaching or in education in general that was making these kids behave as they did.

Then I saw a course advertised by (a project in the school system). Although (the project) had run out of money for (the program) where I worked for three years, it still had money to offer teachers free courses as part of a smaller grant. G. had been very happy when the program ended; he had thought it was a waste of money, that the basic ideas were great but the inefficiency was greater. The fact that close to $2.5 million had already been spent over a five-year period yet no teacher was offering (the special course) that year attested to the lack of change produced by (the project). "I would have changed the whole system around permanently with that kind of money," G. would often muse. But maybe this course would offer something worthwhile.

I enrolled and began attending class every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. It was during the same week I saw the class posted on the bulletin board that Arthur Miller gave his interview on PBS and that I heard about something else. Some kind of institute was recruiting teachers to do classroom research. It sounded like just what I needed. Maybe I could turn the whole situation into a research paper. They offered meetings, discussions, assistance, direction, and on top of all that, typing, taping, and xeroxing.

The week after my first meeting at the Technical Education Research Center (or TERC as it was called), the director asked me if I didn't mind being the only man in the group. I replied that I could offer a man's point of view to the group. Three weeks later, I was supposed to present my research idea. I had my idea all along, but never so clearly as when I heard the teacher of my course on Saturdays mention the works of Dewey. She gave us a copy of some of his writings. Dewey wrote that the "child" and the "curriculum" were at different levels of understanding of the world. His words kept returning to me; they made too much sense. As I was reading, B.'s face kept appearing and disappearing in front of me. After awhile, as I read more and more of Dewey's works, more and more faces would present themselves to me. I felt nervous; my heart palpitated rapidly. I smiled. I had the impression I had found the answers to my questions. I no longer felt alone. If Dewey had said it and I was experiencing it, it wasn't abnormal. Maybe other teachers were experiencing the same phenomenon. I felt normal again. I felt sure of myself and what I was doing. I finally realized what was happening in my classes. Dewey had just told me, very loudly. "The child and the curriculum are in constant conflict." R.'s face would come to my mind, along with H.'s, C.'s, B.'s, and M.'s. The world I had created with my well-prepared, "truthful" lesson plans had demanded of B. and Company maturity, discipline, and the logic necessary to receive and accept. I laughed. I was suddenly awakened from this

revelation by a voice coming from far away, or so it seemed. The teacher was telling us to read all the materials she gave us, and to think about basic thinking skills in preparation for the meeting to take place the next Saturday. B. and her group kept intruding, insisting I pay attention. Dewey again offered me the understanding that had eluded me for so long. The teacher kept talking. I refused to listen to her. If she only realized what effect she had made on me by passing around that "hand out." She had shed illuminating light on my problems. Now if only I could do the same with my students. The teacher kept talking, and I kept thinking, not about what she was now saying, but about my presentation for TERC.

THIRD DRAFT: M.E.

Outline

Topic--Approaches towards developing positive images in students towards themselves, their school, and education.

I. Introduction to the Idea of the Topic

1. Why I feel the topic is important
2. Past educational knowledge of the need for this research

II. The Beginning of the Research Project

1. The questionnaire
2. Why write a questionnaire to give to students
3. Certain items included on the questionnaire
4. Who received the questionnaire
5. When is it best to give out the questionnaire

III. The Day the Questionnaire Was Given

1. How did the students respond to the questionnaire
2. Did the students enjoy working on it
3. Did the students respond negatively toward the questionnaire
4. Percentage of students that refused to answer the questionnaire

IV. Parents' Involvement in Answering the Questionnaire

1. How many parents received the questionnaire
2. How many parents answered and returned the questionnaire
3.

V. Scoring the Questionnaire --(need new word)
How Did I Score the Answers --

1. How were the answers scored
2. What did the students rate real poorly

VI. The Graph

1. What were positive strong points about the attitudes towards school, educators, and others on the graph?
2. What were negative points on the graph towards school, educators, and others?
3. Parents'attitudes compared to students'?

VII. Conclusion

1. When is the appropriate time to pass out a questionnaire?
2. To whom?
3. What do you do with the results?
4. Improving the negatives
5. Pass out a post questionnaire _____ to the first one given in October.
6. Chart the answers
7. Compare two graphs to see if the negative factors have changed to positive attitudes that the _____ may have.

How to Develop Positive Images in Students towards Themselves, Others, School, and Education

The inspiration for concentrating on this particular topic stemmed from working for five years in an urban middle school. My observation of the students and the constant reoccurrence of a variety of behavior problems inspired me to study Dr. Glasser's approach to discipline. I then became a facilitator to a group of ten teachers at the school teaching them what I had learned. I still was not satisfied with all my past knowledge acquired in colleges, private schools, and books. I felt the only way I could obtain in-depth knowledge of how the students that I'm constantly surrounded with felt was to go directly to the source. Fortunately, I'm constantly surrounded by 400-500 students daily, Monday through Friday. What better opportunity could I have in obtaining some of my answers? I joined the TERC group in late October. The organization and the actual research paper helped me put together questions and answers I've had in the back of my mind for years. With the generations of students we are working with today (meaning mostly teenagers), one cannot solely rely on past information but must obtain updated materials and methods, meaning constant research.

I chose to give to a group of 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students a broad questionnaire which would give me a little broader insight into their individual feelings on different things that affect their everyday school environment.

The students were enthusiastic in responding to these questionnaires. Observing the students while they were answering these questions I felt that they were finally saying "it's about time I can tell you how I feel about school." Students who did not choose to participate in the survey were not told that they had to. The students completed the questionnaire without once saying "Do I have to?" or "I don't want to ." This made me feel good about giving students the opportunity to answer questions concerning themselves.

These questions were asked: "Who would read our answer?" "What would you do with our answers?" I explained to each group about my involvement with TERC on Thursdays and said "I'm also constantly learning more about education and am very concerned about your feelings towards different topics." I volunteered to give the students more information concerning the results of the research at a later date if they desired. The students felt more secure in answering the questions after I gave a brief introduction concerning the survey.

Comparing their desire to work on this and other materials given to them recently, I felt this was very therapeutic for the students.

I've observed different types of parent involvement towards their child's education. Some parents visit the school and meet the teachers and staff. They explain to teachers that they are very concerned with their child's education and would be of any help to the teacher if needed. Other parents would only be seen by the

teacher if there was a problem, example: bad grades, tardiness, conduct problem, or high absenteeism. Still other parents feel negative towards their child attending the school because of the busing situation, started in (1974). To avoid being bused many parents enrolled their child in private school or moved to a different location. Some parents because of economic reasons had to work with the system and allow their child to attend schools assigned to them, even though the parent objected to the school assignment.

The various attitudes the parents have about the school make students obtain and project similar attitudes toward the school. It is very important that parents project positive feelings about the value of education and the school. Parents with negative attitudes about the school may find ways of improving the school by involving themselves in programs and activities at the school.

Parents of the same group of students were sent home similar questionnaires to answer. About 50% of the parents returned the answered questionnaire.

Scoring was achieved by changing the number of responses to a percentage. Example: Question #1 for 6th grade students out of 25 students, 8 responded poor, 4 OK, 11 fair,and 4 good. I transferred these figures into percentages and then recorded the highest percentage on a graph. For this case 44% was recorded for a "fair" answer to the questions on the appearance of the building.

The Graph

Some of the strong positive attitudes recorded on the graph from students' answers were that a majority of the students felt the teacher either did a good or fair job in teaching them. The classroom appearance was mostly recorded as fair. Except for one eighth grade class the other three groups of students felt the subjects being taught to them now are important for their future. The sixth and seventh graders felt that the principal does a fair job in his position; the eighth graders were more critical towards the principal; one 7th grade group rated him poorly. This same eighth grade class rated the vice principals poorly on their ability to do their job. The guidance counselors were rated from all four groups of students fair to excellent. All four groups rated the homework given to them as fair.

Rating the other students was what interested me the most. I wanted to see how they felt about each other. Did they idolize each other and would rate other students as excellent, or did they not trust each other and would rate them as poor? The graph showed that everyone played it safe and rated the students in their school as fair. (ADD?)

Except in the group of sixth graders, which rated it fair, all the other groups rated the appearance of the building as poor. Similar ratings appeared on the question concerning the lunches; mostly all students rated the lunches as poor. Nearly all the students felt [illegible] weren't enough extra school activities or programs to jo[illegible]

Nearly all students felt that there wasn't enough time to complete things in school.

The parents were more positive in attitudes toward the school than the students, which was very interesting. When the students rated the appearance of the building as poor the parents of the same group rated it as fair or good. On questions concerning rating the teacher on the ability to teach the students, two groups of parents answered similar to their children as fair. The other two groups rated the teachers as good and excellent while the students of that group rated fair and good. There was always a high rating received from the parents who returned the questionnaire. The question still remains on how the 50% of the parents who did not wish to participate in the research felt.

Conclusions

Research similar to the one I conducted is good for teachers to give their students in late September or early October. Between teacher, administration, and staff, a group should look at the responses of the students in the school and work on ways to improve the negative responses. If the appearance of the building was always rated as poor then the staff may get a group of student committees formed to place interesting posters or pictures throughout the building to improve the appearance. If the graffiti ruins the appearance of the building then a group of student volunteers and staff could work together to clean it up. There would be questions that may be answered as negative and students may not be able to help improve the situation, but through the principal, teachers, and school department, maybe enough professional concerned staff may project enough pull to improve negative factors occuring in education.

A similar questionnaire should be given to the same group in May. The answers should be placed on a graph and then compared to the 1st graph recorded back in late September or October. Areas of improvement should show where students, teachers, administrators and staff worked together to try to improve conditions that students were not satisfied with.

We could help the students learn easier if we as teachers got a clear understanding of their feelings and attitudes by asking them through writing or interviews. This is a constant changing world. Generations of children now think and feel differently than children 5-10 years prior to them. Attitudes toward themselves,

others, school, and educators are constantly changing, but the students are not afraid to express their feelings on the matter, and are more than pleased to let us educators, administrators and staff know.

THIRD DRAFT: C.K.

September 1980 was the first time since I began teaching that I had the same job two years in a row. I was struck by the enormous difference in the two classes--specifically in terms of how they did/didn't listen to each other--especially at meetings (which there are a lot of).

In searching for an explanation several factors seemed significant. They were different children. They were older. (Almost a year--September to June--is a long time in a child's development.) I was a new teacher (for them) who had different expectations of them than their last teacher.

Clearly, all of this was true and relevant but. . . . Was I expecting too much of them? Had I continued to raise my expectations of children the previous year (probably) and then forgot to lower them again? What was appropriate to expect of them in terms of empathetic behavior toward each other and consideration for others?

This led me into reading other people's research on moral development (Lawrence Kohlberg) and specifically perspective-taking abilities (Robert Selman). Their basic argument is that in order to feel empathy one must be able to take another's perspective. According to many theorists, a young child is egocentric and incapable of doing this. It is not that she/he is "choosing" to be inconsiderate but can't see beyond his/her own needs and desires. For example, an infant does not know of existence outside her/himself so cries in fear when mother (primary caretaker) leaves, thinking she/he has disappeared from her/his life forever (probably isn't thinking in terms of forever).

As a child grows she/he "learns," comes to "know" the existence of others as separate entities that exist first in relation to her/himself and later in their own separate lives. It is only after this step that a child can begin to think in terms of putting her/himself in another's "shoes"--contemplate a situation, idea, decision from another's perspective. And this is essential in order to feel any real empathy.

There seems to be some connection between moral and cognitive (spatial) perspective-taking, although, contrary to prevailing theory, one does not seem to be prerequisite for the other. These in turn, seem to be connected in some way (I'm not clear how) to cognitive development in terms of conservation. I have no trouble accepting the validity of stage theory in cognitive development, the idea of an essential sequence to follow rather than a usual one. I do, however, have real questions about the model in moral development. It's too easy to find behavior in children under five that looks empathetic.

The following observations were made by Peggy Stubbs in a few pre-school classrooms in (place and date):

1. Bruce gets labeled the bad guy, Sam notices Bruce's worry and says, "Not you, Bruce. I'm going to save you."

2. When Charlie tells of choking on a rock once, Ben replies in a very concerned manner, "Does it still hurt?"

3. Lucy and M.R. are fighting about who gets to be the nurse. Kai suggests there be two nurses.

4. Randy, declaring himself Aquaman, lifts up his shirt to a blank T-shirt. Sam gets him off the hook by explaining that Aquaman doesn't have a design on his shirt.

As a first-hand learning experience for me on the validity of stage theory in cognitive development I checked on the conservation ability of all the children in my class. Most of them could conserve liquid and thought I was being silly; a few were really confused and wavered back and forth a lot; a smaller number were quite sure the amounts of H_2O changed.

It occurs to me now that it would have been interesting to check on their spatial perspective-taking by giving them Piaget's modified 3 mountain experiment and then see how it correlated with empathetic behaviors observed.

Much of the reading I had done focused on hypothetical situations and/or older children. According to these theories the children I spent five days a week with were probably mostly right on the edge of being able to take others' perspectives and for the most part not really ready to be motivated by empathy in their interactions with peers. Yet I expected them to be considerate of others and have a sense of right and wrong and be motivated primarily by a caring for others. These expectations were shared by the school and probably their parents. And intuitively I thought we were all correct.

So I decided to do research on the empathetic capabilities of a group of 17 seven- and eight-year-olds (my class) in a natural setting. I would not set up test situations but attempt to learn from what was actually happening. The topic was too broad and I needed a place to begin. Since listening to each other in meetings was a big issue and this was one area of our lives together in which I was asking them to take each others' perspectives, it seemed like a good place to start. By this time most of the children were listening to each other most of the time during during meetings. But why were they listening? It seemed that maybe the answer was closer to reasons of discipline than caring: I would be upset with them if they didn't. Maybe they would have to leave the meeting. For example, one day in December a friend of mine was visiting my classroom during a meeting at the end of the day. He observed this exchange and wrote it down:

A: "Hey. That's mine."

B: "I know. I didn't want to talk 'cause I didn't want to get in trouble."

This was from a child (B) who was constantly interrupting at meetings. He finally was using some self-control but the motivation was fear of reprimand, not empathy or respect for peers or any of those other wonderful things.

I had gotten them to listen but it seemed like for the wrong reasons. I had talked to them a lot about respect and fairness but the bottom line was that they had to appear to be listening (at least not disruptive) because I was the teacher and I said so!

Why were they listening?

My first on-site research was conducted in January. First we had a class discussion about why they listened to each other at meetings. I made no comments about their answers (I did smile once) and attempted to establish as non-judgmental an environment as possible. This is what some of the children said. (Eight out of seventeen responded--some twice.)

"So people that want to share things can share things." (A)

"So people can let other people know what they have and feel good about what you've got." (B)

"Be quiet and listen what they're doing and don't fool around." (C)

"So you can show people what you did, what you made, what you like, . . . so other people can see it." (D)

"It's a nice time to sit and relax." (E)

"A time to listen to what other people are saying." (F)

"To show about how they feel." (G)

"We have to listen what other people are saying and not fool around." (H)

"It's a time to get together." (E)

"It's a time to be happy and talk about different things." (D)

Next, after generating a list of questions about meetings and listening, someone came to the school to interview the children individually. Of the 17 children in the class only 6 gave any explanation of why they listen to others in meetings: 3 said because the teacher told them to, 2 because they might miss something important or fun, one out of a sense of reciprocity. These are some of the children's responses to the question, "Why do you listen to each other at meetings?"

[What do you do when you're not interested?] I still listen. Maybe it's boring, but maybe there's some fun part to it, that's why I still listen.

We still have to listen because we have to be quiet when other people are doing it because when they pay attention to you, then I pay attention to them.

I have to listen anyway, because the teacher tells you. I always do. If they don't, they get sent out. And, it wouldn't be fair to other kids. Sometimes it's hard for me to listen. I just try to because I have to listen to what other people say. It's good to listen.

I learned a lot about various children's interests but not a tremendous amount about their empathetic capacities. I was again reminded of how difficult it is for children of this age to articulate motivations. Next I tried two kinds of records which did not end up being very useful to the research. I had the children record what they did and with whom at any choice times during one week. I hoped to find clear examples of children making choices either primarily for a friend's benefit, or in total disregard of a friend's needs. I found neither but I think it was good practice for the children in keeping a daily record of something. (It made science record-keeping a month later a less strange and difficult task.)

During this same week I kept a record of where children chose to sit in meetings (on the rug, in a circle). Again I couldn't really figure out how to use the data I collected.

What ended up seeming most useful is the data I collected by observing children at various times of the day and making notes on this. The most useful times were choice times but things came up throughout the day. I tried having other people come in to observe and that was somewhat helpful, but since I was there all the time I could be most effective.

I also came to realize that my observing and recording was beneficial for other reasons--picking up patterns more quickly, remembering incidents I wanted to recall (weeks and months) later in more detail than I do just from memory for use in parent conferences or consultations with colleagues.

I collected approximately 9 possible examples of empathy and of perspective-taking and 5 possible examples of lack of these in my sporadic observations. The following are one example of each--empathy, perspective-taking, and lack of perspective-taking.

I. When a child applies to the Advent School they come to visit for a day. Some children have an easier time fitting in for the day than others. One child always noticed if a boy visitor was being left out and went out of his way to include him in things.

II. Several girls have had a crush on one particular boy for the last year. It often becomes a popular game--sending love notes, chasing him, writing stories about going to his house, and whose boyfriend he is. It got really disruptive and annoying to him a few months ago, so I began to actively discourage it. Today he came in from recess saying something like, "I've just had one of the worst experiences of my life." When I asked him, he didn't want to tell me about it. It turned out that these three girls decided to tell him they didn't like him in the hope that he would say he did like them and begin to pursue them. He's a child who is nice to everyone and was really hurt by this. Some interesting things about this:

1. The girl who plotted this was, I would have said, not very socially sophisticated.

2. When we discussed this in class later a child who doesn't often enter into these kinds of conversations made the comment that it seems they were trying to get him to say he liked them by telling him that they didn't like him.

It seems to me that a lot of fairly sophisticated perspective-taking was gotten and from the people from whom I would least expect it.

III. Today the gym 'teacher' was absent. She had apparently told the children that she would take them to the Esplanade and they would play soccer. They were disappointed (understandably) but one child went beyond this by saying, "I bet she did that on purpose 'cause we were going to play soccer." Interestingly, the next child replied that he should be feeling badly that she was sick.

Some of these behaviors can be interpreted as motivated by empathy and the ability to take another's perspective; others as the lack of that ability or children choosing not to use that ability. Having not questioned them about their motivations I can only offer these as possible explanations. However, I think such data is still valid and important to look at.

It became clear to me why this kind of research is not often done. Observing in a natural setting means a lot of waiting around for seemingly relevant things to happen. Observing 7- and 8-year-olds, one is limited by the difficulties they have in articulating their motives. A researcher is often left ascribing possible motives to behaviors without being able to corroborate much.

What I am able to conclude as a result of these observations is that it appears that some seven- and eight-year-olds are capable of empathy at some times. It is also likely that those who are capable of taking others' perspectives do not always choose to do so.

DRAFT: N.R.

Outline

I. Observations from previous years

A. No "natural growth" from year to year as measured on MAT

B. Poor skills especially decoding any word c____

C. Turned-off attitude

D. Behavior problems

E. Few answers to question "What book(s) did you read last year?" Consisted of the name(s) of (a) book(s)

F. Reading very seldom listed on survey form as "favorite subject"

II. Description of Celtics

A. Third stanine on Stanford Diagnostic

B. "Perky" as a group

C. Anxious to read orally

D. Panicky about writing anything
anecdote--Encyclopedia lesson

E. Good at working in small groups or pairs

F. Much sharing behavior and helping behavior

G. Some immaturity in dealing with disliked other

H. Little general knowledge except B.

I. Vocabularies lacking many common words
   1. volt 3. brief 5. beagle--anecdote
   2. bawl 4. cyclone 6. dusk 7. seldom

J. Low self-esteem

K. Majority dialectal speakers

L. Poor memories

III. Program

A. Phonics

B. Spelling
   1. Emphasis on grapheme/phoneme correspondence
   2. Encoding from phonemes
   3. Reducing importance of visual memory

C. Syntax
   1. Stevenson program: anecdote--Benjamin
      a schedule change
   2. Notetaking

D. Oral Reading
   1. Stories from basal reader (feel need to defend this book)
   2. Stevenson material
      a) memory association
      b) repetition of a few phonemes throughout a story
      c) sentence game
   3. Choral reading of poetry

E. Silent reading
   anecdote--Are You there God?
   1. Paperbacks
   2. Magazines
   3. Observations
      a) strategies used by students to get around decoding difficulties
      b) behavior

F. Reading comprehension
   1. Questions to answer orally or written:
   anecdote--Mystery story--L.
   2. Cloze procedure
      a. description
      b. revelations about student familiarity with standard English
         1) Had had
         2) Lay
         3) Lay in dialogue

c) Content clues
d) Questions and explanations
anecdote--Student org. sheets

G. Writing
1. Tree poems and drawings
2. Wanted Posters
3. Amazing Mixing Machine
4. Notes to teacher
5. A Spoon Can be ...
6. Pencil stories
7. Sentences
8. Paragraphs

IV. Summary

The Evolution of My Thinking Regarding the Reading Comprehension of Urban Sixth Graders

Many Boston Public School students arrive at sixth grade with a resignation that the only skills for which they will be rewarded in school are an ability to "tune out" completely and/or a talent for creative distraction. These students expect the teacher to praise the "tuned-out" silence as good behavior and they expect the other students to laugh or at least smirk at the distractions. Of course, a distraction par excellence is one that makes the teacher obviously angry.

Generally, these new sixth graders read at a level 1-3 years below the national average, cite gym and recess as their favorite subjects, and remain mute if asked to name a book they have read.

I prepared for the fall of 1980 on the basis of the previous falls' administrative chaos in assigning students with the following expectations: a 766 program that never seems to get going and the attendant state of rage induced in me, pubescents who hate school and whose only goal in life seems to be to give me a hard time.

After the usual false starts and multitudinous incorrect lists, any sixth grader whose reading achievement level fell into the 3rd stanine on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test (S.D.R.T.) was placed into a group which henceforth came to be known as the Celtics.

I met the Celtics on the third Monday in September at about 9:30 a.m. The Celtics were "perky" as a group but what first intrigued me about them was that they apparently were intending to forego my initiation proceding. Furthermore, throughout the year no Celtic ever purposefully created a distraction to get me mad. There was only one "tuned out" Celtic. I have no explanation. But I felt my teacher juices renewing at a fast rate, since they were not constantly being tapped by stupid questions meant to annoy, behaviors meant to distract, and other stable floor idiocy. More about this theory later.

Like most of their predecessors, the Celtics displayed little general knowledge except for B. who was exceedingly well-informed and quite a delight because he would get all worked up and talk like a tape recorder on fast-forward whenever he was sharing one of his tidbits with the class.

I would meet with the Celtics 90 minutes each day except on Fridays when the additional 45 minutes silent reading period brought the time to 135 minutes. During these 90 minute sessions the Celtics displayed much sharing and helping behavior. They were excellent at working in pairs and small groups except there was some immaturity when certain individuals tried to share space.

"What are you looking at?"--indignant demand.

"Nothing much,"--staring directly at the questioner.

Thump! Bang!--a desk being moved to block the view of the starer.

A majority of the Celtics were dialectal speakers whose vocabularies were lacking many common words such as volt, brief, bawl, cyclone, beagle, dusk, and seldom.

During an activity which involved sentence writing I discovered that no one, not even B., knew what a beagle was which is not important in itself except that it represents a pervasive but generally unrecognized problem in the urban classroom. I had given the group a list of questions whose purpose was twofold: 1) to diagnose decoding difficulty with graphemes that generally have the long e sound, 2) to elicit complete sentences as written responses to questions. The Celtics enjoyed reading the questions aloud and appeared to enjoy success during this activity. So I asked them to write an answer to the question, "Can a beagle fly in the air?" and bring their responses to me as they had finished. There was a sudden quite apparent mood change in the group. I asked, "What's the matter?"

S. said, "What do beagle mean?"

As soon as I explained that a beagle was a dog, that Snoopy was a beagle, the lesson continued with its previous success except that from then on I asked if anyone needed to know a word meaning. They did; they needed to know steeple. And in later excercises during the year they did not know the meanings of ladle, dread, sable, and bugle. [theory here]

Even though they enjoyed writing sentences, the mere hint that they might have to write more than a sentence induced a panic approaching terror.

One morning I had taken the set of encyclopedia from the bookshelf. As they entered the room, the students seemed to stop short at the sight of the encyclopedia set, catch a breath and resume in a more cautious, guarded manner. Of course, it had not yet occurred to me why the encyclopedia were causing this reaction.

I proceeded with my lesson, somewhat hesitantly. I wrote five questions on the board such as "Where do potatoes grow?" and asked for volunteers to select the encyclopedia volume which might contain

the answer. There was no great enthusiasm. However, with a little prodding people did select the appropriate volumes. Next I handed each student a question on a little 3 x 5 piece of paper. I had prepared the questions ahead of time, one question for each of the 21 volumes. I had wanted each student to select the appropriate volume and find the answer to his particular question. Chaos set in. What I observed was people unable to select the appropriate volumes, much loud complaining about not understanding what to do, inability to look up a word, inability to find answers to questions such as "How much do male tigers weigh?" even though the answers were either under a picture on the first page of the entry or in the first paragraph of the entry.

Hindsight tells me that this lesson had been doomed to failure as soon as the group set their eyes on the encyclopedia.

Encyclopedia to them meant long written reports based on information they couldn't read. In retrospect, the students' minds had become frozen with the image of impending failure because they had always failed before with encyclopedia. They had comprehended nothing from my explanation about the lesson I had planned for them, not because I had suddenly become incoherent but because they had locked their brains shut, and closed all their senses tight. It was a collective "tune out." But if anything about this encyclopedia lesson pleased me, it was the realization that the Celtics were not usually "tuned out" but tuned in and that if they could anticipate success they would try. I tried to bear in mind that writing a long report was also repugnant to them because the physical act of writing was tedious. As a group they tended to have underdeveloped small-motor muscles--writing was the same cumbersome process for them that it was for children much younger.

I began to feel like telling the Celtics they were my favorite group, the best in years, but I didn't know why.

In the meantime, R., a bilingual teacher to whom I had said very little in previous years approached me one day with a suggestion that we work together on a research project for an "anonymous society" called TERC. I felt enthusiastic about doing research about the Celtics. I wanted to know what was different about them or was I doing something that finally clicked? Above all I wanted to teach them how to read better. So I joined TERC.

It was for TERC that R. and I tried to coordinate our reading/ language arts program. I planned to use the Celtics as subjects for my research, and R. selected the Mayas, a group of bilingual children who read about two years below the norms for sixth graders. R. and I were both especially concerned about reading comprehension and agreed that comprehension would be the area that received the thrust of our efforts.

We chose the group Cloze procedure to investigate improvement in comprehension. From previous years' observations we had both

concluded that the typical Celtic or Maya could successfully complete a comprehension exercise consisting of questions on a selected passage. They were very adept at "lifting out" information required to answer literal questions, less adept at making inferences, and reluctant to write evaluations. However, we both agreed that they were using strategies to answer these questions that were not dependent on comprehension of the passage.

R. and I decided to use the group Cloze procedure as an instructional tool with the hope that the strategies that the students devised to complete Cloze tasks would be more truly comprehension strategies to help them truly comprehend the deep structure of the passage. We also hoped that concentration on filling in the deleted words in a Cloze exercise would focus the students' attention on the surface structures of written standard English, thus familiarizing them with the structures which were alien to spoken dialectal English.

The Celtics reported to me that the Cloze exercises were "very hard," but they could not explain to me why. So I began to ask about specific deletions. I concluded that they needed to focus on the context in which the specific blank was placed. I began to ask why particular students had chosen particular words for particular blanks. The responses revealed that the Celtics were ignoring context clues. When I pointed out a clue, they would respond with "Ooooh, Oh yeah!"

Soon the Celtics were making more logical choices for the deletions and were readily explaining their reasoning. These reasons were a wealth of information to me about their understanding of vocabulary and syntax. For example, most of them thought mend meant sew. They did not include in the meaning of mend the general idea of fixing and repairing. They thought that the past perfect tense "had had" was a typographical error. They also noticed on their own the word "lay" as a past tense and questioned me about its use.

Dialogue caused much trouble at first. The use of quotation marks and new paragraphs to indicate a change in speakers was all new information to the Celtics. Also they had to learn to use pronouns as clues to the gender of the antecedent. The concept of plurality was shaky since a word in its plural form does not mean plural to a dialectal speaker. A deletion preceded by a number such as Two _____ would just as likely be filled in by a singular noun because dialectal speakers say "Two boy." Similarly the phrase _____ boys did not indicate to the Celtics that "one" or "a" could not fill the blank. "A" and "an" were not context clues to these dialectal speakers since they do not say "an" at all. In addition "in" and "and" were homonyms for them. Sorting out this information and much more sent me into myriads of daydreams about devising a new curriculum which clarified all these confusions from day one in grade one.

R. and I continued to administer Cloze exercises and record results. We also planned a coordinated language arts program, the

salient features of which follow:

A. Traditional phonics exercises from The New Phonics We Use Books E, F

B. Spelling
   1. Emphasis on grapheme/phoneme correspondence and memory associations.
   2. Reducing reliance on visual memory
   3. Encoding from phonemes

This strategy taken from Basic Goals in Spelling by Rottmeyer and Klaus proved to be immensely beneficial and even entertaining to the Celtics. I began by constructing flash cards containing the phonetic spellings of some very simple words, i.e., [kat] for cat. The Celtics delighted in pronouncing the words and then spelling them correctly. These exercises progressed from words to phrases to complete sentences containing a variety of phonemic symbols such as [ô] [ʊ] etc. Homonyms received much emphasis in this manner with particular emphasis on memory associations such as you eat meat and you hear with your ear and a deer has two eyes to see with and two e's to be read with. I observed considerable progress in spelling and a concomitant decrease in wild decoding strategies. The Celtics were no longer decoding multi-syllabic words on the basis of the first letter plus length. For example, at the beginning of the year it would not be at all unusual for a Celtic to read "cautious" as "careful" because both words are about the same length and both begin with "c."

C. Syntax

Syntax might sound like pretty heavy stuff for a bunch of struggling urban learners. And quite frankly, I greeted the idea of syntax as part of my curriculum pretty numbly since I had abandoned it in frustration several years earlier. But M. was bubbling with enthusiasm, so I agreed. M. was a protégée of Nancy Stevenson who has developed reading and English materials for troubled learners.

The Celtics arrived the year after my introduction to the Stevenson Syntax Program.

Most of them liked syntax but nobody more than D. Around the middle of the year D. would say "When are we going to do syntax? I love syntax!" What had happened was that I had changed syntax from Tuesdays to Mondays to accommodate the 766 people, and D., who rarely came to school, had not noticed except that on Tuesday when he showed up for syntax we were doing spelling. That's why he had begun asking. He was never able to make the transition, however.

D. Oral reading

Oral reading was by far the Celtics' favorite activity. But since oral reading by its nature encourages the reader to focus on

decoding and showmanship over comprehension, I tried to use passages we had already used for comprehension, the Stevenson stories, and choral reading of poetry. The Stevenson sentence game was requested very often. To win a point for his team a player must read a sentence aloud perfectly--no repetitions, mispronounciations, etc. The sentences containing ea which could be long ē, long ā, or short ĕ were the most challenging. I dread eating breakfast while wearing my sweater.

E. Silent reading

Silent reading was the least successful part of my program for the Celtics. They hated it and complained constantly that it was boring, etc. That these pleasant children during reading instruction could become such nags during silent reading was pretty amazing to me. I spent considerable time trying to figure out how to get them to sit still and read silently.

For materials I had hundreds of paperbacks and magazines at all reading levels. Some of the paperbacks were in comic book format. Some were just barely past the primer level. I tried shortening the time. I asked people to tell about the books they were reading. I offered a prize to whoever read the most books. Overall, two-thirds of the Celtics never got into reading independently for personal enjoyment.

I recorded my observations of several silent reading periods in my journal. People would sleep, leaf through magazines, stare into space. Some would actually read a book, but they were a definite minority.

My first postulation is that these kids just didn't have enough decoding ability to enjoy a book independently. Perhaps a whole book seemed formidable.

My most helpful observations were the amount and variety of strategies used to avoid decoding--

1) ask me
2) look at pictures
3) ask the nearest student
4) look out the window

Maybe the time of day was wrong--right after gym but right before lunch.

G. Writing

The first writing exercise was a poem that we all wrote together after reading a poem about a tree during the four seasons. I would write on the board, the students on paper, but we used ideas from everyone. Each student then drew a tree from observing one of the two trees visible from our classroom window. This idea about observational drawing came to me from one of the projects at TERC. The results were gorgeous. Later each student wrote his own poem about his own tree. The joint poem seemed to preclude any complaints about getting started, what to write, etc. because there were none.

The second formal writing exercise was definitely the most successful. Each student made a WANTED POSTER about another student. I took a polaroid snapshot of each individual. We hung the posters on the side wall and they attracted readers from all over the building including the eighth-graders.

After the WANTED POSTERS faded, they were replaced by The Amazing Mixing Machine. At first glance this machine was a huge green piece of cardboard with all strings going in and out of it. The kids thought of two things to mix together--these were sent into the machine--the result was a picture and a description. There was a lady with a fish tank for a head, a creature with a duck's body and a cow's head, a kingbo--a cross between a king and a hobo, and assorted other "mixtures," all accompanied by vivid descriptions.

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION ON 6-11-81

In interviews, some people said it would have helped them if the project had been more fully and clearly described early in the seminars. Now that we have all done "it," what would you suggest we tell people if we were starting over with a new group of people.

In what ways was the project useful to you?

What do you think we should do to make the project better if we were to do it over with a new group of people? As we write it up for other people to read about and possibly to try, what cautions or recommendations for changes should we include?

We have emphasized developing an open/safe environment in which each person is helped to think about his/her question in a way consistent with his/her teaching and point of view. Some people in interviews have said they would have liked more challenge to people's ideas or more opportunity to ask each other "Why do we do what we do?" rather than so much "How?" What do you think? Are there ways we could combine both?

What do you think about the journals and the responses to the journals? If you wish you had written more, do you think it would have been helpful if we had exerted more pressure on you to write? What kinds of pressure? Are there other things which would have been helpful?

What did you read, where did you get it, what did you think about it?

What do you think about research?

What questions should Eleanor ask in her final interview?

APPENDIX E

SUMMARY

We propose a one-year project to stimulate, guide, support, and document and analyze teacher-initiated research.

There is increasing concern for the dissemination and utilization of research knowledge in education. There is also increasing interest in research designs which include collaboration between researchers and practitioners. We propose to conduct a weekly research seminar for teachers which is based on successful pilot programs, which extends those programs, and which offers an alternative to existing models of collaborative research.

The study will include a number of small pieces of research initiated by teachers and conducted by them in their own classrooms. Participant teachers will be selected from among experienced, competent volunteers. Each participating teacher will choose a question related to his/her classroom to investigate with the guidance and advice of the seminar leader, in collaboration with selected graduate students in educational research.

By using the teacher seminar as a laboratory, the project will also research questions relating to teachers' utilization of research-produced knowledge. We will investigate patterns of participating teachers' initial and developing interests and the relationship of those interests to current educational research and theory.

The seminar will require that participating teachers identify an area of concern or interest to be investigated, supply them with new information and insights regarding their classrooms, identify relationships between their investigations and established results in educational research and theory, and encourage them to reflect on the implications of their results for their practice. It will, therefore, also provide a laboratory for studying questions related to staff development. We propose to capitalize on that opportunity, since there is also a current need for research on the revitalization of experienced teachers to avoid "burnout."

By documenting the teacher seminar process, the project will provide a model of teacher-initiated and -directed research for schools and school systems to replicate.

Seminar participants will be helped to publish their own research findings. The report of the seminar process and its relationship to the utilization of knowledge will be disseminated to researchers and practitioners.

Questions Related to the Utilization of Knowledge

- What are the initial stated interests of experienced, competent teachers?
- Are there patterns in the expressed interests which relate to the teacher's age, the number of years of teaching experience, the school setting as perceived by the teacher, the age of the students, or the social class or racial composition of the class?
- How do the initial interests of the teachers shift and develop?
- What basic educational research is related to the initial and the developing interests of teachers?
- What are the significant realities of public school teaching which influence and constrain the choices teachers make in their classrooms and which influence the way they conceive of their classrooms?
- What questions do teachers pose which cannot be answered within the limits of the project, i.e., which require a larger sample, more sophisticated research techniques, or longitudinal studies?
- What professional literature is useful, interesting, and accessible to teachers? What is the form and content of that literature?
- What recommendations can be made to researchers concerning the content and style of presentation of their work which will make it more useful and accessible to teachers?

Questions Related to Staff Development

How do teachers react when they find that their practice does not match their goals for their teaching?*

What changes do teachers make in their classrooms as a result of the investigations they carry out?

What techniques are effective in providing feedback to teachers who are uneasy about assessing the results of their work?**

How do teachers influence each other in the seminar?

cc sent to 13

TERC Technical Education Research Centers

APPENDIX F

8 Eliot Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138 Telephone 617-547-3890

5 August 1981

Peggy, Eleanor, Christine, and I are finishing the report. I'm writing to check to see if you have any concerns about our descriptions or our using exerpts from your journals and interviews.

I'm sending you a copy of the current version of the description of your project. It will be proofread and edited, but probably not changed substantially.

We've discussed whether to use your real initials, made up initials, or none. In any case, we will not use your names.

The report will be sent to NIE and they will automatically enter it in the ERIC information center. Most universities have access to ERIC. Anyone who asked for a listing on teacher research from the ERIC system would get a copy of the title and abstract. If that sounded interesting, they would ask for the full report. TERC will also print 1000 copies to be distributed to people who request them. You will each receive a copy.

My guess is that this is not an issue for most of you. If you do have some concerns, please let me know what they are. Eleanor and I are working together out of town for a few days so you will not be able to reach me by phone at home or at TERC. Leave a message or write me a note.

I'm also sending you a copy of part of my chapter for the book which Peggy and Teresa Amabile are editing. It will be published by Pergamon Press in about a year. Again, I don't think there are any problems, but wanted to check with you.

Sincerely,

Claryce

Claryce

TERC Headquarters:
44 Brattle Street
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

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APPENDIX G

INTERVIEW GUIDE I

1. History as a teacher

   - How you decided to
   - Teacher preparation
   - Where and what you taught, how long

2. How you got into this

   - How you heard of it
   - What made you interested--What you understand it to be
   - What you hope to get from it
   - Your apprehensions
   - The question you want to investigate

3. Orientation to teaching

   - What are your strengths as a teacher
   - What are your weaknesses as a teacher
   - How do you know if something "works"
   - What was a teaching "high" this year
   - How do you plan--a day, longer range, an unexpected moment
   - What constrains you
   - Who are your luminaries in education
   - What beliefs about children have changed since you began teaching
   - What have you learned as a teacher, that a 1st year teacher doesn't know
     How did you learn it

4. How you keep up

   - Further degrees
   - Further coursework
   - Sabbaticals, leaves
   - Reading
   - Do you keep a journal
   - Who do you talk to about problems, successes
   - How are you evaluated

INTERVIEW GUIDE II

1. How does it compare with what you expected?
2. What are its best features?
3. What are its weaknesses?
4. Why do you think it took the group so long to get going?
5. Has it affected you as a teacher (your thoughts about teaching)?
6. Has it affected your thoughts about what research is?
7. Do you find the group diverse? Too much? Not enough? What do you think of the diversity?
8. Have you gained from other people's projects? From what they found out, or from how they went about it?
9. What are your thoughts about observers as a way of getting information?
10. How has journal writing been? Claryce's and Peggy's responses?
11. Has any reading been useful?
12. How are seminar and $2^{1}/2$ interacting?
13. Any comments on Chris' report?
14. What are your expectations and hopes for the rest of the year?

INTERVIEW GUIDE III

1. Where did you get with your project?

2. With hindsight, would you do your project differently another time?

3. If this were to be done again with a new group, what should be the same? What should be changed?

4. If it were to continue with this group, what should be the same? What should be changed?

5. If it were to continue with this group, do you have any idea of what question you would investigate? How you would investigate it?

6. If it had been organized as independent study--what would that have been like? (i.e., no group) Would that have influenced your project? Would that have influenced the general merits of the program?

7. How did you feel about your participation in this group?

8. What are (would be) the next steps you would want to take, for your growth as a professional?

9. Can you see yourself being different next year as a result of this, even if it doesn't continue?

10. How would you describe this project to someone who was trying to decide whether to participate?

11. What three projects would you mention to give a range of examples of what people might do?

12. What is research?

13. What is teaching?

APPENDIX H

TEACHER-INITIATED RESEARCH SEMINAR

A SHORT REPORT

TAKEN FROM
THE REPORT PRESENTED TO
THE STAFF OF THE PROJECT
ON 20 JANUARY, 1981

Christine Davis
Longfellow #215
Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

INTRODUCTION

In December 1979, a proposal for a project called "Teacher-Initiated Research" was submitted to a national education research organization and received their support for the academic year 1980/81.

In September 1980, as part of my graduate work I was looking for a long-term teacher development programme of some form in which I could play a participant-observer role, and heard about the project. After negotiating with the leader, C.E., I joined the project from its first official meeting between the teacher-participants and the staff on 16 October, 1980.

I entered the site with six years of experience running, organization and writing about teacher development programmes of a similar general type; whilst on the site I continued to write and read about the theory and practice of teacher development under the rubric of other courses I was completing.

This paper has grown from the interaction of all of these perspectives upon aspects of teacher development with the data I was recording as participant-observer to the process and some of the data that was gathered by the staff about the process for their own documentation process.

For two hours a week (on Thursdays 4-6 pm) a number of elementary teachers from the Greater Boston area meet for a seminar intended to help them become researchers into themselves as teachers and into their classrooms. It is those meetings which occupy the focus of this analysis although journal writing by the teachers, staff meetings and project documents have been included.

In all, the data upon which the analysis has been drawn includes:

- field notes of CD (self) occupying an observer role in the <u>seminars</u> and a participant-observer role in the <u>staff meetings</u>.
- grant proposal documents
- journal writing by the teacher participants and the replies to that writing by staff members

- "notes" written by the scribe, Py, on the basis of her documentation of the seminars. These notes form an important part of the recording process for the research aspect of this project; they enter the permanent file and are available to participants (since January, 1981 they have been distributed weekly--prior to that one copy was held in a common file for anyone to refer to)
- notes, letters and memos written by CE to the staff or to participants.

In the interests of confidentiality, the individuals are not named (their initials are used throughout); the school systems in which they work are not named specifically and the seminar site has been called the ABC building.

The full report was prepared with two audiences in mind

: HGSE personnel associated with the course T-550

: staff members of the project

and will be given to each group on the same day (20 January, 1981).

I anticipate that the HGSE personnel will consider themselves bound by rules of confidentiality and that the report will not be shown by them to anyone else; I consider the full report the property of the staff of this project to be used by them as they will. This report has been developed for reporting to the teacher-participants and is based upon the full report. Some journal sections and descriptions have been eliminated for the purposes of confidentiality. /Journal quotes which remain have been checked with the authors./

The Setting of the Seminars

The seminars were held in the 'ABC' building which houses the offices of the 'AB Corporation'--an education research group under whose auspices the whole project proposal was submitted for funding.

The ABC building is a clapboard building of some age and no great beauty in the vicinity of Harvard Square. It is an old rambling house now holding the office space for a number of ABC personnel and projects and providing a basement in which seminars are held.

The project has an office on the ground floor; the project's part-time secretary also works for ABC and she is housed adjoining the project office. This office is a small bare room which has a couple of filing cabinets, CE's desk in which material for the project is stored, a typing table, and, sometimes, a drawing table used by an ABC illustrator grabbing some space. The room is bare of decoration; all of the furniture has been well-used and is strictly utilitarian, public-office-dark-coloured metal. In summer an air conditioner sat uneasily in the window, surrounded by cardboard, but with the advent of winter it has been taken out.

The seminar room is in the basement, reached by a set of stairs immediately to the right of the front door which is open for the duration of the seminar but which is not the regular entrance to the building (a hand-lettered notice in the front window asks people to use the side entrance). A further set of steep stairs leads down to the back of the seminar room from a small foyer near the side entrance and near the secretary's office/project office.

When the seminars started, the basement room was in the process of being refurbished. It had been two offices until a short time before and, on 16 October, it presented a fairly unpleasant prospect. The air was musty and a little dank, indicating clearly that the side door to the basement had not been open recently.

Pipes and wiring were exposed, there was a wooden structure, which later proved to be the framework of a closet, in one corner, and the walls were not well painted. A number of plastic stacking chairs were placed around three tables not quite matching in height and arranged to form a long, reasonably narrow rectangle. The floor was cold and uncarpeted and the legs of the chairs made an unpleasant loud noise as people moved them in or out.

At her opening welcome 'speech,' introducing the ABC, AN told us that in time the place would be "gorgeous." It has changed, the exposed wires/pipes are now encased, the closet is complete, the room has been painted, tables for computers edge the room, forming a permanent display for the more usual computer workshops. There are magazine racks and cupboards upon which is placed the coffee, cheese and crackers and wine which are part of the weekly ritual. If not gorgeous, at least more habitable.

The project funds supply the coffee/tea/cheese and crackers. Wine was supplied for the first week and the wine drinkers have agreed to take it in turns to bring some wine each week. One of the rules of the seminar is that people are free to get up to help themselves to drink/food at any time--there is no break. During the second session, one of the teachers indicated that the noise she made when moving to do so concerned her--she worried that it was distracting to others. CE reassured her that that was not an issue--since then, despite the noisy floor/chair leg combination, people have got up during the seminar, helped themselves to whatever, and rejoined the group without any disruption of the process. Smoking is banned in the seminar room.

The Participants...16 teachers from the Greater Boston Area

There are in the group hints of strong commitments to egalitarianism--One teacher querying criticisms of basal readers because some of them are more stereotype-free than other books with blacks and women portrayed realistically;

another with a long history of confronting racism through her teaching, writing about the segregation of some of her Asian students into a class purporting to help them:

> I feel that I am using an abnormal amount of energy on the issue concerning kindergarten E.S.L. classes. I would like help and direction in a meaningful way that would bring my concerns to the bilingual program planners. When the seminar began, I had a class of Chinese, Greek, Spanish, Laotian, Russian, Cambodian, and American children. The Laotian and Cambodian children do not speak English. My class has now been divided so that all the Laotian, Cambodian and Russian children are in a separate class that is an English as a second language class. The teacher speaks only English but all the children speak Laotian, Hmong and Russian...
>
> Granted, extra help may be needed to help non-English speaking children but it should be positive. The options could be: 1) having an itinerant teacher taking children out of classes for extra help; 2) placing non-English children in an extended day program with one half time spent in mixed setting so that they practice and exercise extra help offered. What I see is a separate but equal system operating on another group of powerless people. Do I stand by and help this happen?

All indicating a commitment to doing the very best job they can for the students in their classes--driving themselves to make maximum sense of their classrooms and their role.

Some of the Features of the Seminars

- Seminars are held weekly with most people attending most of the time although almost everybody has missed one-three sessions (see Figure 2).
- At the beginning of each session, CE devotes some time to announcements. These cover administrative issues like
  - stipends
  - credit
  - journals
  - xeroxing procedures
  - negotiation procedures with systems.

The first two sessions had a preponderance of such time as the process and the philosophy was explained. As the seminars have continued there are fewer and

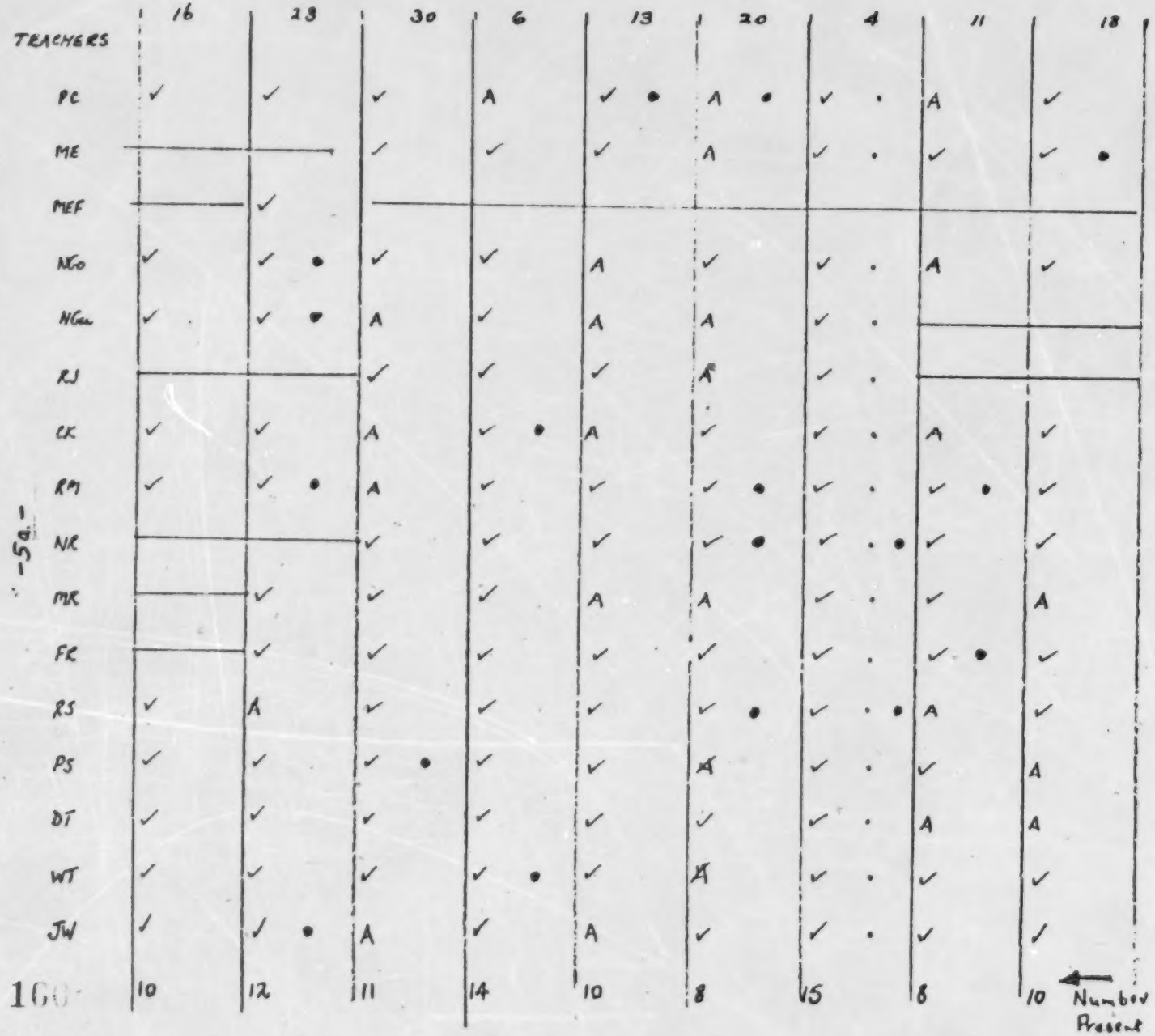

FIGURE 2: ✓ THE ATTENDANCE PATTERNS
• PRESENTATION PATTERNS

-156-

-54-

160

fewer announcements (although there is a continuing saga of negotiation with one of the school systems represented in the group).

- An issue which has been given one or two airings in the whole group, and which is still of concern to one or a few, is dealt with in a conversation after the session, e.g., after several discussions about journals, one teacher raised the question: What exactly do you expect of us: and she was asked by CE to talk about it at the end of the session since others did not need clarification.
- After the initial seminars, teachers were invited to "sign-up" for a time slot in a forthcoming seminar. At that time, s/he was to "make a presentation" of a question which s/he had about his/her classroom, and to use the group's questions as a means to:
  - clarify the question
  - determine what information could illuminate that question and how it could be collected using the resources of the project
- The resources which the funds of the project make available to assist in the process of asking and answering questions include: secretarial assistance, consultant time, observation and substitute time, tapes (audio/video), books and articles, photocopying.
- The project has been funded as a research project so it has its own documentation process as described in the grant proposal (see Design of the Documentation and Analysis of the Seminar, in Proposal).
- Credit has been arranged through Lesley College. Some people seemed interested but the prospect of paying $150-$450 for credit when none of the work was being done by the College put people off (one teacher called it "outrageous"). It did not even seem as if there was very much interest in or concern about credit and that most people were

there to learn rather than just to stack up credit. As a participant pointed out: We can include attendance at this in our resumes so that's enough.

- People arrive on time usually; the 6:00 pm finishing time is adhered to rigorously and most people leave at once. There is very little lingering and chatting before or after, although increasingly, brief conversations between CE and/or Py and one or two participants occur.
- Participants have not developed the pattern of sitting in set places. I have deliberately sat in different places each week, to vary my access to the body language of the group, which may have influenced that pattern (in the second week I sat where one of the teachers had been seated the previous week--she made a direct amicable comment about: I see we are not sitting in the same places). CE tends to sit in the centre of the 'top' of the table and Py in the same place, near an audio-tape recorder for which she is responsible.
- Most sessions have followed the general pattern of:
  - : announcements
  - : report back from the people who were "signed-up" the previous week
  - : time for the 1, 2 or 3 "sign-ups" for that day.

The exceptions to this have been:

- Session 1 which was directed at filling in the context for the proposed process
- Session 3 in which some collective brainstorming around the questions of: What ways can I collect information: and About what sorts of issues can I collect information (see Notes from Meeting of October 30, 1980).
- Session 7 in which, before NR and RS had their time slot, every person was asked to indicate briefly where s/he was in his/her thinking.

- The seminars seemed to call forth attention and intensity in people. During the sessions, the most common posture was inward looking, towards the centre of the group. Whilst individuals were looked at when being addressed, there was no pattern of remarks being directed at one person or another--through this behaviour people were signalling an ownership of the group nature of the process. Even though CE played a significant part in the dynamics, there was little evidence of her being deferred to above all others.

There was one brief exception to this pattern. In Session 2, CE had called for a brainstorming of ways to gather information in the classrooms and of questions to ask oneself but the intention of having a brainstorm was lost as several people took the time of the group with detailed discussions of their current concern. After the session, we discussed it and I commented that, if a large list of ideas was required, it might be necessary to structure the session so that ideas could be received without comment, thereby preventing the recurrence of what had happened.

When I arrived for Session 3, I discovered that CE had equipped herself with paper, magic marker, tape, etc. She carried out a brainstorming session which yielded the list on page 8a by being the scribe and fairly directive. During this time, the participants spoke to her, not to each other, and their language was the language of lists--not of discussions. At one stage, she walked to the back of the group (near the present closet) to look at the array of ideas on the wall and all eyes stayed with her, instead of on the papers. Later she told me that as she realized this, she changed her position and sat down as soon as possible. This certainly indicates that had CE wished to play a dominant

Notes from the Meeting of October 30, 1980 -- Session 3

Ways to make more information available to yourself.

Ways to collect information.

Ways to become more aware of what you know.

Ways to better understand something that is happening.

Without responding to or discussing any of the suggestions made, we generated a list of ideas in response to two sets of questions. The first set of questions had to do with ways of getting information. How can/does one go about getting information about one's students? What are some ways of making information more available to oneself? What are different ways of collecting information? How can you become more aware of what you already know? What are some ways of better understanding someone or something in your classroom?

Ideas

observations
testing
tape recording
interviewing
video tape
anecdotal records
questionnaire
informal conversation
cumulative records
parent conferences
conferences with friends of the student
make lists
tell another person
go to the library
health records
ask social service agency personnel
student teacher
talk to another teacher
save samples of student work
guided recall/free association
ask your principal
ask the student
observe the student doing something s/he's really good at or really enjoys
observe the student in a different environment
student journals
keep a record in your head

Questions you might ask about something you are currently doing.

Questions you asked yourself last year for which you would have liked to have had better answers.

Hunch you have about something in your room on which you'd like more information.

A phrase which represents something which puzzles you.

Phrase which represents a problem that information might help you to resolve.

Something about which you're pleased and which you would like to document.

The second set of questions had to do with the kinds of questions people might be interested in investigating and what kinds of things were there to document. What questions did you have last year that you wish you had the answers to for this year? Do you have a hunch about something in your classroom? What phrase tells about something that puzzles you? What phrase represents a problem you are dealing with or recognize in your classroom? Is there something that you are pleased about?

Ideas

Why did/didn't something work?
Teaching styles/learning styles
Physical environment
How space is used
What skills are required to perform a certain task?
How much am I assuming my students know before I go on?
What kinds of things are age appropriate?
How do we know what's age appropriate?
Why should we believe what someone tells us is age appropriate?
How can we change a task to make it become more age appropriate?
How can we use children's interests?
Is Billy learning anything?
Are my activities too teacher directed?
How can I make my teaching more student centered instead of teacher centered?
How can I appropriate time more effectively?
How to pace the day
How to coordinate the classroom with support services
What am I educating these students for?
How can I be more effective at getting parents and the community involved so that it motivates students' work?
Are my students becoming more cooperative?
Does the task leave room for personal expression?
How fast am I accelerating to being burned out?
How can I get kids to be willing to take a guess or a risk and to value making a mistake?
How can I develop some standards of morality without imposing my own values?
Is my emphasis more on process than product?
How can you get kids to apply the skills they have in the testing situation?
How can I get students to apply what they've learned to their world knowledge?
What do I do to develop critical thinking?
What do I do to develop creative thinking?
How do you phase in and out of things?
How do you handle transitions?

role in the group, they would probably have let her--a point I wish to take up later.

- There were a number of explicit rules laid out by CE about the functioning of the group. These included acceptance of any person'a version of a story--the group was invited to offer idiosyncratic interpretations of an incident as reported by a group member, but not to question the description of the incident. This was well received by the participants--it seemed to be seen as respectful towards them.

Another recurring theme to which I attribute some significance was the one that: we are not here to change a teacher: "There are many paths to being a good teacher," CE said in Session I, and referred to her own experience as a principal having been a strong confirmation of this attitude which she had had for a long time. As Py said in the notes, "The purpose of discussion is not to convert someone to some standard position; the purpose of discussion is to help people look more closely at their own work." As I shall elaborate later, there is an inevitable dilemma within this stance because the act of looking more closely at self is an act of change--even if subtle.

Anyway, the tension called out by this attitude still recurs. One teacher's journal indicates that some of the response she got during her discussion was of the 'conversion mentality,' she felt, and sat uneasily upon her. A stronger example is that which occurred when NR and RS made a joint presentation regarding their intended use of the CLOZE procedure in their class(es). The procedure can be as mindless as 'fill-in-the-missing-blanks' with a narrow conceptual framework of right/wrong answers; it can also be the source of enormous and subtle growth in language and can be a responsive tool for diagnosis/assessment of language development

within the broader framework of looking at the type and category of word which a child inserts into a space in discourse. NR and RS are well versed in the technique and are interested in broadening their use of it. During Session 7, they spent more time looking at examples of their children's written cloze exercises and the interaction was such that it brought a letter to NR/RS from CE which then was distributed to everybody. That letter produced the following response from RS.

> Last week's discussion left me with both positive and negative reactions. Like you, I came away with a feeling that people were trying to change our minds about the use of the cloze as a valid measure of comprehension. Such opinions didn't surprise me. The cloze is such a unique method of looking at reading comprehension that most people, on first exposure, reject its validity. Even I had problems with it when I first learned about it. After three years I've become convinced of the usefulness of the Cloze. Likewise, within the reading profession, research on its usage as an instructional and testing tool is increasing. Even Boston had adopted it as a tool for measuring the reading scores of its bilingual students in both L^1(first language) and L^2(English). I could go on and on citing examples of WHY the cloze is valid and what the literature says. I feel that perhaps people in our group reacted on an emotional basis against the format of our procedure--of which they knew very little. Their bias fogged the issue of what Nancy and I are trying to research.
>
> Even though people were questioning <u>what</u> we were doing, and how the cloze fit in to our schema I felt all in all people were respectful. The questions that were raised were interesting. The questions gave me a perspective I don't have about the cloze since I'm already "sold" on its validity.
>
> ...What I found really interesting about the discussion was people's suggestions on how the cloze could be used as an instructional tool. I felt that everyone was open enough and imaginative enough to see alternative uses. The spirit of investigation and questioning was exciting. The ideas that people gave us were good ones. We'll probably incorporate them into our curriculum.
>
> Although people gave some good ideas about using the cloze, I don't think they were helpful in our analysis of errors. You and Peggy provided a good part of the impetus in focusing on our needs.

(10a)

12-6-80

Dear R and N

Was last week's discussion helpful to you?

I feel strongly that we are not here to change each other's way of teaching, that when two people in the seminar do things in two different ways, neither of them should assume that one way is better than the other. So, I've asked people to accept the point of view of the person presenting.

I would hope that we would ask a lot of questions in order to understand as well as we can what the other person is thinking. Only then do I think we should make suggestions to the other person. And the suggestions should be within the presenting person's framework as we understand it.

Last week my impression was that people were trying to convince you to change your mind about certain things. I felt whenever I asked them to focus on a paper and try to figure out what a student might have been thinking, they would start making suggestions again or start telling you that the Cloze procedure wasn't really doing what you wanted.

At the same time, I felt they were genuinely trying to be helpful and were genuinely respectful of you. I also had the impression that you found the discussion interesting and challenging rather than upsetting. So, I didn't strictly enforce the guidelines I had set up.

What did you think? How did you feel?

Did you think people were being respectful of you even if they disagreed a lot and made a lot of suggestions? Was it different for different people?

Whether or not you felt they were respectful, did you find the session helpful?

Do you think you understand any one of your students better?

Do you have a better way of looking at the work your students are doing?

Do you think that the two of you could now sit down with four papers similar to the ones we looked at on Thursday and learn more from them than you could have before the session?

Do you think you have some new ideas for extensions of your investigations which are consistent with your ideas about teaching and consistent with the realities of your classroom, school, schedule, etc?

After writing this, I realize I have made a lot of comments about the functioning of the group which I ought to share with everyone. I will give copies to everyone, but am still interested in your answers to the questions. Originally I thought you might respond in your notebook. That is still fine with me. Probably after reading this other people in the group will also ask you, or want to ask you, for feedback.

C

Could our presentation of the problem have been part of the difficulty?

Was the group so unclear as to what we're doing that they grabbed onto the technique so as to have something to discuss?

Perhaps we were in fact part of the problems.

- Another feature of the seminars provide an interesting dilemma. One of the intentions is to set up a chain of distribution of articles to find out what is useful and what is not. The articles and books are to come from staff, graduate students and from participants and their value is to be assessed by the participants. The intention is to be able to make comments in the final report about what types of education material is useful to questioning teachers.

  Thus the seminar allows the participants to confront ideas in writing which might be 'banned' in the discussions.

- The general quality and stylie of the interaction between the participants and participants and staff has been very good. There has been an ease and comfort from the very beginning (one of my cross-cultural reflections was to decide that it was unlikely that a group of randomly selected /although volunteer/ Australian teachers would be as comfortable with each other and with the idea of being together as the group who met for Session I was). Although there were the different styles of interaction--from quiet to jolly to reflective to outgoing--there is a general feeling of goodwill within the group.

  As people talk with each other, they use devices which show some experience of groups and the techniques advocated by many group theorists (they listen well, they paraphrase, they make 'I' statements, they don't 'tell you'--they 'share with you'). Some are particularly adept at responding well to any opening or issue that a person raises although all

are very likely to fill that role. There seems to be a high level of acceptance of the others in the group.

Although process comments are rare, there is a 'straightness' of the interactions which indicates some skill in process in many of the participants. CE has set the tone here, telling anecdotes, admitting her doubts and fears, mistakes and successes. The motivation for any structuring move she makes as leader is always explained so that people do not feel manipulated. (Despite this, one person spent some time in the journal speculating on her hidden agenda but could not find one.) An indication of this openness is that the copy of the ethical rules of the American Anthropological Association, under which this study was carried out, was distributed to all participants; as she did so, CE commented upon her reading of them, indicating that she objected to the wording of the one about reports being made available to the population studied <u>if practical</u> as she considered the population studied most entitled to feedback.

An indication of the ease which people feel with the group is the move of several to use the group as a support mechanism, e.g., one teacher chose to 'share with' the group her anger and frustration about an incident which occurred in her school between one of her more unpopular students, the lunch supervisory, the principal and her. Another teacher has asked the group to act as her support group as she works through her grief/anxiety about the presence in her class of a child who is terminally ill with leukemia. As a gesture towards her concern for the ethics of her discussing this issue in the group, I have not taken any notes during her time slots, nor will any further mention be made of this issue in this report.

- When talking with each other about the questions being raised by a teacher, there is no shortage of comment and involvement. There seems to be respect for each other's concerns and a willingness to engage with them. In response to an issue, the group will:
  - make suggestions of what to do, to observe, to think about, to read
  - anecodote and talk about personal experience
  - offer solutions
  - ask for further information to clarify the context

  And all most amicably, so although there are those unresolved issues of change and 'conversion,' there is clearly quality to the professional dialogue.

AND YET, as of writing this paper,

- no teacher has engaged in a research project
- the staff is constantly expressing concern that what is happening in the seminars is great but it is not enough and they do not feel comfortable floating with the pace and style as things are at the moment
- the style of interaction in the seminars is changing.

- In order to make sense of these behaviours, it is necessary to conceptualize the process of the project as operating at various levels:
  - within the seminars, as described, above, attending to such questions as:
    'Who says what to whom and how?'
    'Who does what to whom and how?'
  - within the total context of teachers acting as researchers:
    'What does a teacher-researcher do or think?'
    'How are these behaviours learnt?'

- within the project, as teachers initiate research projects under the stimulus/support of the seminar:

  'How does CE conceptualize teacher-researchers?'

  'What part does the seminar process play in helping teachers become teacher-researchers?'

My thesis is that, at the moment, the teachers are engaged in the process of including in their total repertoire of images of self that of self as teacher as researcher and that this perspective will provide a framework for understanding and evaluating the seminars to date and planning the future direction of the seminars and the project.

The Concept of Teacher as Researcher needs to be given some historical and cultural perspective before progressing any further.

Firstly, a researcher is one who:

- observes and reflects
- asks and answers questions
- seeks to make meaning of the contexts which are generating the questions
- recognizes and questions conjunction and disjunction
- knows appropriate ways for answering the questions to a reasonable standard of satisfaction.

Ultimately, there is no mystery about the research process--the mystery derives from the mystique of methodology and the esoteric language of research reports.

The image of teacher as researcher is being given impetus from a number of directions. As learning theory emerges from the Dark Ages of unadulterated behaviourism, so an appreciation of the problem-solving, trial and error, hypothesising, deducting, inducting process that is inherent to learning is growing.

As curriculum development theory emerges from the metaphors of curriculum as conduit and curriculum as clone so the problem-solving processes of the classroom teacher are becoming the focus of the attention of curriculum theorists. As the relationship between theory and practice is recognized more and more as practice being theory in action and theory being practice in reflection, so teacher developers are beginning to look to processes which aid teachers to become:

- reflectors and observers
- askers and answers of questions
- makers of meaning of their contexts
- seekers after information

i.e. to become researchers into themselves as teachers.

Such an image of teacher development is gaining power in projects around the world, e.g. Ford Teaching Project coming out of the UK at the Centre for Applied Research in Education, University of East Anglia, the Curriculum and Learning Unit, South Australia which works largely on an action-research model of teacher development, the Language Across the Curriculum Movements in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, the Bill Hull Seminars on Children's Thinking in the Boston Area and Pat Carini's work at The Prospect Centre, to name a few. <u>They have different surface structures, but there is a similar underlying commitment towards teachers taking the stance of researcher to themselves and their teaching</u>.

Nevertheless, they represent a minority view of teacher development, albeit a growing minority. From the explicit nature of the statements about teaching made to teachers in teacher education, the media and school structures, and from the implicit messages of the transmission methodology of schools of education, the emphasis upon supervision, externally imposed curricula and accountability measures, the teacher is given a clear sense of powerlessness, of being the technician administering other people's meanings, of doing what is perceived by someone else

to be required. Thus despite the clear evidence of problem-solving behaviour in their daily lives, there is rarely in teachers a conscious assertion of being the means of production of their onw knowledge, with the researchers and administrators as resources to that process. Susan Florio's experience is relevant here of bringing a researcher and teacher together.

> As the researcher spent more time in the classroom, the teacher felt more comfortable and better informed. The teacher felt that she was beginning to have a definite hand in the research. She realized that although teachers do not have time to be ethnographers in their own classrooms, they can become more observant participants. New insights and questions generated by the teacher and researcher could be checked out by the teacher by means of reflection during and after teaching. This enabled her to become a part of the process, not just a source of data.
>
> For the teacher, the task is curiously reversed. She is continually immersed in the fray, and, like many other teachers, expreriences loneliness and frustration in that immersion. The teacher has learned gradually to look at her classroom problems not only with the company of her researcher colleague, but to reflect on her own using more of the perspective and techniques demonstrated by the new colleague. She is reflecting on what she thinks, does, and absolutely knows about her class. She is an insider gaining some internal distance on her role, and this enables her at certain moments to see the familiar in a new way.
>
> Concretely this curious blend of roles has generated a procedure for classroom research in which both teacher and researcher work closely in the posing of researchable questions, the formulation of hypotheses, the gathering and analysis of data.

Retaining a sense of the broad context of teacher development programmes is important when analyzing the progress of this project to data. To take on the notion of teacher-self as researcher, a teacher has to shift a clearly established set of behaviours and images of self which are a significant part of the current cultural definition of being a teacher and that it is this person which can be seen reflected in this project, in the talking and writing of the teachers and in how these have changed, in the time line of the process and in the staff's response to and recognition of the process.

Time	CE	Py	Teacher	Ts.	CE	Py	Ts.	Time	CE	Py	Ts.
4.13	G			5.19	NR - RS present to group.			5.46			E1
4.22	G										E3
JW introduces as issue.				5.22	A1						E1
4.27			E3				A1				E1
			A1				C				E1
			C				C				E1
			E1				E1	5.50			D
4.29	A1/E1						E3				D
		E1					B				D
silence →							B				D
							E1		A1 (fingers)	A1	
4.31	A1			5.29	A2		D				C
			E1						A1 (clockwise)		
			E1		A1						
			C				D				
4.35			E1				D		A1		
			D				C				D
			E2				D				E1
			E3	5.34			D		A1		
	A2					A1			1		D.
		E1		5.36			E1/D				
			E1				E1	6.00			
			E1			A1					
		A1					E1				
4.41			D				D				
			F				E1				
		A1					F				
						A1					
4.45 – 5.18 RM has attention of group – not coded.											

Record of types of utterances made by CE Py + the teacher-participants.

Session 6.

FIGURE 3.

The list of speech behaviours which I gave on p.13 , was derived from an analysis I carried out on Session 6. The categories noted for each separate utterance, differentiating CE and PY from the teachers, are defined below. The frequency and distribution of the utterances are given in Figure 3.

A. a response which was able to open up possibilities for the person, assisting him/her to realize that s/he could solve his/her own questions

E.g., What is your hunch about your question?

What information could you need to know in order to satisfy yourself?

A.1. focus on methodology of investigation

A.2. focus on content

B. a response which offered answers, solutions

C. a request for more information, the filling out of context

D. general information giving, including anecdote

E. suggestions of things to do:

E.1. do

E.2. observe

E.3. think about

E.4. read

F. general talk

G. housekeeping, administrivia.

As can be seen, the dominant speech acts are acts of 'telling' and 'suggesting' (these included anecdote and experience). This, I see as within the culturally acceptable definition of teacher's conversations with colleagues. The images of self which appear to be underlying the type of talking 'allowable' at this stage include:

self as colleague

as peer

as group member

as sociable person, etc.

These images fed straight into the quality of interaction which I have described earlier, sustaining and enriching it. They also fed into CE's and PY's response to the discussion (and to mine) viz: that there was something of quality happening and that attempts to structure the sessions so that 'this' (whatever it was) did not happen would not be necessarily very useful. A recurring theme in staff meetings was the tentativeness everybody felt in turning this process about and the intuitive feeling that what was happening had some significance, yet no participant was researching.

The rate of the utterances in Session 6, indicates another dimension of the dynamic. As in earlier sessions, the comments came quickly, suggestion upon suggestion, anecdote upon anecdote. One teacher, after her session, for which I took the notes (Py being absent), asked me to mail her a record of the suggestions as "it all happened too quickly... I couldn't write it down and talk at the same time" Given the fact that few people from those early sessions have got any closer to a research project, and despite their polite statements to the contrary, it would seem as if their session did not fill a useful function for them (although maybe a crucial role in group establishment). What may have been happening is that the idea of teacher-as-researcher was so poorly established in the minds of the speakers and listeners at that stage that the outcome of the session could not be a research project as the hypothetical mode was not being modelled by anyone.

Things are Beginning to Change and several people seemed poised on the brink of 'doing it.' The changes are becoming obvious in the language of the seminars and in the journal writing. It is these changes which make me think that the teacher-as-research image is being established and acted out.

Py reports that taking notes for Sessions 7-10 is much easier--there is more focus and she has more sense of questions and suggestions, which help the teacher concerned, being offered. My notes indicate a clear shift in the language of the sessions with more questions and more suggestions which would rate as an A coding on the list delineated earlier (see p.18).

Session 9 is an interesting example. During her session, the teacher received highly focused comments, in which questions which forced her back onto herself predominated. For the first time in these sessions, the presenting teacher made explicit comments about the usefulness of the process and indicated that she was making connections as she went. Although not a process of dialogue, the comments from the others were calling out new meanings in her understanding of herself and her context.

The questions asked and suggestions made tended to be specific:

"When is he at his best?"

"Do you think you know the time or situation when he is disruptive?"

"Why don't we take one child at a time?"

although there are still comments like:

"Maybe you need more structure, and less disruption."

And as the questions flow, the teacher comments:

"Excellent...these are good suggestions... You're wonderful...which is why I keep coming." and "Maybe I am talking myself out of having an observer" and so on.

A similar shift is evident in the journal writing. The functions of recording and reporting are dominant in the earlier writing--much of the writing includes notes from the sessions, lists of books and articles (usually not accompanied by evaluative comments), anecdotes and descriptions of classroom events. Gradually, reflective-hypothetical writing appears. Anecdotes are accompanied by reflections and questions of self, the tone becomes more personal (many of the earlier questions are distanced 'out there' abstractions).

What is the source of these changes? How, given the embedded nature of the non-researcher image of teaching can a different image be learnt? Teachers can:

- read about teachers as researchers
- hear about them
- become researchers by doing
- have a consciousness raising experience which causes them to espouse the notion.

Very likely, a combination of all modes is required, and this can be seen in this project. I would contend that it is the experience of hearing about and reading about teachers as researchers, and the model of teacher as researcher which both CE and Py offer in their oral and written language, which has been the source of this growth.

It is helpful here to reflect upon CE's image of the research process and how the teachers perceived research at the beginning of the project.

In response to CE's and Py's clear statements in Session I, the teachers know a lot about classrooms "buried under runny noses and desks" (to cite Py's great description), there was a very clear sense that people liked hearing selves. However, very quickly, one person talked about "having knowledge at her fingertips" but lacking "the background to make it presentable, factual, logical."

Her writing reflected this concern that any research she did be statistically based and comparable to any large scale research or sophisticated design.

At the end of Session 2, as we cleared up, Py, CE and I decided that RESEARCH as opposed to research was an issue for the project to confront. It was in the context of that concern that CE decided to try again a brainstorming session--to model to the participants the unmysterious nature of data gathering and question posing. Nevertheless, the implicit assumptions of experimental research design emerge frequently (control groups are suggested, 'there ought to be a test for that' is said, 'we need a questionnaire').

Both CE and Py have a very different sense of the research process. Influenced by the Carini and Hull emphasis upon observation, aware of moves in education to derive research methodologies from the phonomenological tradition, and to move from the agricultural-botanical paradigm, they have each written articles about changes they would like to see in educational research and its distribution. They would both like to see collaboration between researchers and teachers (although not as patronizing as Susan Florio's, maybe) and clearly theirs is not a quantitative/deductive sense of research. CE's reply to one teacher's request for a lecture on research is typical of her attitudes.

12-30-80

Dear ____:

Research formats. It is a long and complicated topic. I'm not inclined to give a lecture on possible research formats, but will be glad to try to answer questions and will try to find some articles and books to read.

Here are some short comments:

There is a lot of disagreement among the professionals about educational research. Much of the disagreement addresses questions of technique or method, but I think is also about purposes and more fundamental questions about the "nature of knowledge."

There are people who think educational research can be and ought to be "real science." By that they usually mean "experimental" and "control" groups and statistical analysis of differences in "outcome." (I guess I should also state explicitly my bias in this. I have little confidence in this position, even with respect to "science." That bias comes from reading research in that tradition and being subjected to it as a staff member of various federally funded projects. The bias is somewhat supported by reading I've done, including Kuhn, The Nature of Scientific Revolution, which gives a different view of the traditions of science.)

There is a growing number of educational researchers who think that education should stop trying to mimic "science" and develop other traditions and techniques. Some of them borrow ideas from anthropology and call their work "ethnographic." They study educational setting as one would study a strange culture, sometimes as participant observers. Someone in the group has an article by Denny in which he talks about ethnographic studies, claims few people do them, and argues that we need more "story telling." Ask at the next seminar to see who has it; I think you might find it interesting.

Pat Carini, Bill Hull, and a group of people at ETS, Ted Chittenden, Marianne Amarel, and Anne Bussis, are also developing a new approach to educational research. They assume that teachers are the best sources of information about classrooms and students' functioning in classrooms and have, therefore, tried to help teachers recognize that they know a lot about classrooms, to make that knowledge explicit, and to make it more public so it will be recognized and valued by other people in the field. (As you might guess, I find their work more interesting than most other approaches to educational research.)

I've set aside two publications you might want to read. The first is Improving Instruction Through Classroom Research which presents the traditional "scientific" view of educational research. The second is "Five Faces of Research on Teaching" which very briefly outlines different approaches. I'll also look around at home to see if there are some other things which I think might be useful.

Do you still think we should talk about it in the seminar? I've had a lot of arguments about it in my life and don't find them particularly productive. My inclination is for us to proceed in a fairly straightforward manner--what would you like to know about your classroom - how do we think we might be able to find out - without more ado. But, do let me know what you think or bring it up for discussion in the group.

Claryce

In their language in the seminars and in their responses to people's writing, they have modelled the reflective-hypothetical mode. Although their writing styles are very different, they constantly use personal experience to make connection with something a person has made, or give some form of affirmation of the person, then proceed

from that connection to:

: pose the questions which the point raises in their mind

: pose the questions which the teacher could reflect upon

: suggest types of data gathering which might serve to illuminate the context.

In the discussions, Py is usually silent because her major role is documentor. The analysis of Session 6 (Figure 3) indicates that both CE and Py are the major sources of questions which throw the teachers back on themselves, as definers of their own reality. I first became aware of this in Session 3, when I noticed CE posing the "Have you a hunch...," "What do you know already..." "What information would be useful..."-type questions. Whilst she does not ever take up most of the discussion time, and holds back a lot, she does model the questioning technique consistently and frequently, and whenever she anecdotes she does so in the context of principle. Given her potential to influence the group, as mentioned earlier, it is probably of no small import to the development of this project that she does so.

Many of the teachers have shown great interest in hearing about CE's experience with classroom-based research and in reading the few reports there are of such processes and philosophies. Material by Denny, Florio, Hull, Carini et al. has been circulated and read with interest. Further, each person has received the list of questions raised in CE's pilot programme and cited in the grant proposal. So though modelling, reading, and listening, they have been assisted in the development of their self image to accommodate the notion of teacher-as-researcher.

When CE set up this project, she anticipated an easy development into the classroom-based research. Her memories of her pilot programme eight summers ago had led her to think that the process was going to be simple. The focus of her funding attention in the grant was upon getting enough money to finance the enormous number of observers and substitutes that this process was going to demand. So far no observers and no expenditure!

In the grant proposal, her image is of teachers coming to a seminar with an initial "area of interest or concern" regarding the classroom and being helped by the seminar to "restate the concern as a request for information...(be helped) identify the relevant information which is already available...identify additional information which will be useful, and select the most feasible method for collecting additional data" (pp. 9-10). Then they would go back to their classroom and carry out research.

But, to carry out research one has to see oneself as a researcher and to carry out research is to examine one's image of self and one's practice. Apart from inducing noticeable change, the act of self examination is change. Change toward a reflective mode, change toward greater articulation of self, change toward the conscious assertion of self as a source of knowledge, change toward incorporating self as researcher into one's repertoire of images of self--all at differential rates and around different issues. And it is this change process to which I have been witness.

Implications for the Future

IF, this construction of my observations resonates with the perceptions of CE, Py and ED, then it says some things about:

- understanding the time frame for the type of growth such a project demands of people
- reflecting on the modelling process and ways in which that can be made more potent
- finding ways to give people more opportunity to read about and hear about action research
- finding ways to help people experience the research process and to recognize it in their previous experience
- using this report as the basis for some direct discussion of the concept of teacher as researcher with the teacher participants
- seeking verification of this construction through the next round of interviews.